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NOTES

ON

HOMILETICS.

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HOMILETICS.



INTRODUCTION.

I. HOMILETICS, from *δμιλλητικός*, social, the root verb *δμιλέω* meaning to hold converse, is the science and art of preaching.* It designates all that belongs to the composition and delivery of sermons, or it is the application of the principles of Rhetoric to formal Christian discourse.

We say "Science and Art," because it seems to partake of both. By science we gain a knowledge of things, without respect to their use. This certainly lies at the basis of Homiletics, which has to do with analysis as well as synthesis.

Yet, if it be an art, it does not belong to the Fine Arts. They begin and end in themselves, having no object outside of themselves. They may, especially in their highest and best forms, greatly impress men, and the impression may be moral, as well as, and perhaps instead of, æsthetical; but the artist has no such design. He simply endeavors to give expression to his idea or conception. He has no thought beyond that. He gives unrestricted play to his imagination; the will to direct it towards some practical end beyond itself is not called into action. This is true of the finest creations of the sculptor, painter or poet. Conceiving of the sermon as a work of art, Dr. Steinmeyer, of Berlin, told his class that when they made their sermons they must banish from their minds all thought of their audiences, and develop whatever subject they might take in hand having reference alone to its perfection in itself. This is a misconception of the sermon; it has a definite object outside of itself, viz., to determine the will.

Still Homiletics is an art in the sense of adapting means to an end; it teaches us how to combine the elements of what we have acquired of the Scriptures,

* "The distinction between science and art is, that a science is a body of principles and deductions to explain the nature of some object matter. An *art* is a body of precepts with practical skill for the completion of some work. A science teaches us to know, an art to do; the former declares that something exists, with the laws and causes which belong to its existence; the latter teaches us how something may be produced." — Thomson's Outline of Laws of Thought, p. 16, 2d edit.

theology and history, — in fact how to use all our acquisitions, so as to attain the great end of preaching, the salvation of men. (See Vinet's Introduction; Shedd's Introduction to Theremins' Eloquence a Virtue; Shedd's Homiletics and Pastoral Theology, ch. II.; Campbell's Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence, Lect. I., p. 93; Day's Art of Composition, Introduction; Philosophy of Rhetoric, by Geo. Campbell, Preface.)

II. *The Relation of Homiletics to Oratorical Discourse in general.* Their fundamental principles and aims are identical. Both seek the best methods of influencing men in accordance with the known laws of mind, and the ultimate end of each is the determination of the will.

Homiletics, however, differs from secular oratory in the following particulars: —

- (a.) It gives greater prominence to the didactic element.
- (b.) Its aim is more exalted. The salvation of man, which it seeks, is an object incomparably superior to the highest that calls forth the energies of the advocate, the statesman, or philanthropist.
- (c.) It regards its own appliances, however skilfully directed, as futile without the aid of the Holy Spirit.
- (d.) It measures its success not so much by the immediate effect of a single effort as by the general result of an entire ministry, or the efforts of a lifetime.

(e.) Unlike secular oratory, the chief source of its material is the testimony of the divine word, the clear declarations of which on any given point is the end of all controversy.

III. *The Importance of Homiletics.* This is shown (a.) by the fact that preaching is the means by which the world is to be saved (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15; Rom. x. 15-17); (b.) the Divine life of the church developed and perfected (2 Pet. v. 1, 2; Eph. iv. 11-13), and (c.) by the fact, that the holiness and consequent efficiency of the church have always been measured by the scripturalness, spirituality, and energy of its pulpit.

(1.) No one will deny the power of the press. We ought to rejoice in that power and use it for good to the largest possible extent; but it can never take the place of the living teacher. The lyceum lecturer still has a greater charm for the multitude than the written page, despite all our efforts to educate the people and to popularize and cheapen the best literature. There is no substitute for that personal magnetism which interpenetrates, sways and lifts up both the eloquent speaker and his audience. The impression thus produced

is always contagious. The orator touches some of his hearers, their kindled enthusiasm reacts on him, augmenting his fervor and glow, and also spreads to others hitherto untouched, till the whole mass is moulded together and animated by one spirit, and yields itself to one common impulse. Hence men are more deeply moved in masses than in their quiet, isolated retreats, reading the printed page, however eloquently written. No wonder that Lamartine said, "Of all the eminences which a mortal may reach on earth, the highest to a man of talent is incontestably the sacred pulpit." (Potter's Sacred Eloquence, p. 26.)

(2.) In the first centuries of Christianity, when the Church was generally flourishing, the preaching was usually very simple and expository. Two or three homilies were delivered every Lord's day. Tertullian says that no congregation of the Primitive Church separated without being fed with holy sermons. (See Bridge's Christian Ministry, p. 173, note.) In the time of Origen, allegorical and cabalistic interpretation received so great an impulse as to mark that period as an era. Under the influence of such teaching the spirituality of the church began to wane. Still later, men preached from the Fathers, rather than from the Scriptures, and the church sunk into still greater darkness.* The Reformation of the 16th century was preceded by a revival of preaching in some localities, and followed by one more wide-spread. The devotion and efficiency of individual churches in Protestant countries now are in proportion to the efficiency of their pastors in the pulpit. We might cite also the European pulpit of the 18th century. (See Vinet, p. 73.)

IV. *The Danger of the Study.* As it has to do especially with the forms of thought, we are in danger of divorcing them from the substance, and of occupying ourselves exclusively with them. This leads to artificiality. There may be brilliancy still, but it will be that of the iceberg. A preacher devoted too exclusively to mere forms of thought may attract, amuse, and, perhaps, in some degree, instruct, but he can never move men. But a clear perception of the vital connection between Homiletics and the chief sources of its material, viz., the Scriptures and a sound Christian theology, and an abiding conviction of the great end sought in preaching, viz., the salvation of men, will effectually guard one against this seduction.

It is objected, since God has promised to give utterance to those

* In the 16th century the degradation was still greater. Cornelius, in his *Geschichte des Münsterischen Aufruhrs*, p. 25, says: "In the sermons that were delivered, the discourse was not so frequently from the holy histories and doctrines of the Fathers as from absurd fables, poetical legends, the newest miraculous stories."

who herald his truth, that it is substituting human for divine wisdom to study the art of influencing men. The same objection might be urged with equal fairness against all study in preparation for the work of the ministry. God has never promised to do for man what he can do for himself. We can expect God's blessing on our preaching only when we faithfully employ all our resources in persuading men to be reconciled to God.

CHAPTER I.

TEXTS.

I. Every true preacher is pre-eminently an expounder of the Scriptures.

(1.) The New Testament bids the preacher proclaim only God's word. This is implied in the great commission. (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15.) Christ teaches that the preacher is the sower of the word. (Mark iv. 14; Luke viii. 11.) Paul charged Timothy to preach the word (2 Tim. iv. 2), and especially commended the bishop who toiled hard in word and doctrine (2 Tim. v. 17). As to the manner of preaching, Christ and the apostles adopted the method of the synagogue. (Luke iv. 17-22; Acts xiii. 15-44; xvii. 2, 3.)

(2.) This was also the prevailing conception in the first centuries. Sermons were then usually expository. It was only when, in the course of regular expositions, some short passage presented itself to the preacher's mind as specially rich and important, that he unfolded it in an extended discourse. (See Chrysostom's Homilies.)

We find in this historical fact the explanation of the word *text* as now employed. It is from *textus* or *textum*, something woven. It was used to designate the unbroken web of discourse in the Scriptures, in contradistinction to the comments on it. Just as we speak of the Greek text of the New Testament, as distinguished from the numerous translations or expositions of it, or of the text of the classics, or of that of a contract. (See Palmer's Homiletik, p. 299. Hagenback's Liturgik und Homiletik, p. 96.)

But the present custom of preaching on a single sentence or verse of Scripture, rather than on an extended passage, gradually grew up. Yet, however brief the passage, it is still the text of Scripture on which the sermon is ostensibly the extended comment.

II. There are positive advantages in being thus shut up to texts of Scripture for the germinal thoughts of our sermons.

(1.) The chief advantage of a text is the authority that it imparts

to the preacher and his discourse. He announces his text as a message from God, and he speaks himself only that he may impress it as such on the minds of his audience.

(2.) The following are some of its incidental advantages: —

(a.) It honors, and awakens reverence for the word of God.

(b.) It instructs the people in the Scriptures, and

(c.) By the law of association, it aids them in remembering the discourses which they hear.

(d.) It gives variety by multiplying subjects, and vivacity by rendering those subjects specific.

III. As the preacher is an expounder of God's word, the rules for choosing a text are self-evident. All texts which do not clearly belong to that word are of course unfit for the pulpit.

(1.) Texts of doubtful authenticity, though in the received canon, are excluded.

(2.) We are not at liberty to preach from a text which is manifestly a mistranslation. If it be taken as the foundation of a discourse, the preacher, by a re-translation or paraphrase, must give the exact idea of the original.

(3.) Since odd texts are liable to amuse rather than instruct or enforce truth, they ought not to be sought for.

In addition to these negative rules we notice, —

(1.) That uninspired texts, recorded by inspiration for our instruction, may sometimes be employed, when what they teach accords with the inspired utterances of Scripture and they present important facts, provided that we make known their real character.

(2.) That when it is the preacher's object to impress the minds of his audience with some specific doctrine or duty, it is evidently best to choose that text which expresses that doctrine or duty most simply and clearly. If, on the contrary, exposition is his chief object, he may take obscure texts, especially if they contain important truth, and endeavor either to make them plain, or to show that they are hopelessly obscure.

(3.) If a long and short text both teach with equal clearness the same truth, the short text is preferable, as it makes a more definite impression and is more easily remembered.

(4.) Great texts, because they have often been treated by dis-

tinguished preachers, ought not be avoided. If they interest the preacher, he ought to unfold them fearlessly.

(5.) We should not habitually neglect any portion of the Bible.

Whether the text shall be first chosen and the exact subject which it teaches afterwards determined, or the subject for which a suitable text is afterwards found, must be left altogether to the discretion of the preacher. The spiritual condition of a church or congregation, the prevailing beliefs of a community, the questions or events agitating the minds of the people, and the stimulus of good books, will often suggest to the vigorous and studious pastor subjects of the highest value, before the texts which contain them have occurred to his mind. Such living themes ought not to be lost, but the texts in which they are embodied should be sought out and unfolded. Yet we cannot but regard it as most desirable for the preacher to study the Scriptures so diligently that the subjects for his sermons will ordinarily be suggested by the texts which especially attract his attention, touch his heart, and clearly unfold themselves to his mind.

CHAPTER II.

INTERPRETATION OF TEXTS.

THE preacher, as an expounder of the divine word, is solemnly bound so to interpret the text chosen for discourse as to bring out its exact thought. To do this he must, —

(1.) Carefully determine the meaning of the words; especially must he accurately settle in his own mind the signification of the key-words of the Bible, such as fear, flesh, faith, heart, righteousness, light, etc. This preliminary work is absolutely indispensable to a correct interpretation of the Scriptures.

(2.) He must note that, in the language of the Bible, the poetical element predominates; its utterances are popular rather than scientific, concrete rather than abstract. Hence it delights (Vinet, p. 113),

(a.) “Alternately to diminish and augment;” e. g., Luke xiv. 26. As examples of diminishing, Rom. i. 28; Eph. v. 11.

(b.) “To make absolute that which is relative,” and vice versa. Matt. v. 39. Neither Christ nor the apostles *absolutely* obeyed this precept; cf. John xviii. 22, 23; Acts xxiii. 3; yet they did obey it in not resenting injury. Isaiah l. 6; 1 Cor. iv. 9–13. Other examples, Luke xiv. 12; 1 Pet. iii. 3. Relative for the absolute, Luke xviii. 14.

(c.) “It generalizes that which is particular,” and vice versa; e. g., Ten Commandments.

(d.) “It delights in synonyms and parallelisms.” These abound in the poetry of the Old Testament, but are sometimes found in the New Testament. There are also words of which the difference in meaning is perceptible, but still they furnish insufficient ground for the separate divisions of a discourse; e. g., 1 Pet. iv. 18.

(e.) It does not sharply distinguish such words as foolish and wicked, wisdom and piety, to see and to know; e. g., Rom. i. 21, cf. 31; x. 19; Ps. xiv. 1; cxi. 10; Prov. iii. 13; iv. 7; Matt. v. 8; John iii. 3.

(3.) He must make himself acquainted with the geography of Bible lands, especially in its physical aspects, with the history both political and religious, the modes of thinking and the peculiar customs, of the nations brought before us in the Bible, and especially of the Jewish nation, since all these things are reflected more or less perfectly in the language of the Scriptures. A thorough mastery of them not only clears up many obscurities, but also invests the sacred page with unflagging interest.

I include in physical geography not only the mountains and rivers, but also the vegetation of all kinds, together with the animals of Bible lands. How, without knowing the customs of the country, could any one explain Matt. xxiv. 17, 41; Ps. cxxix. 6? What force is added to the objection of Naaman the Syrian (2 Kings v. 12) by knowing that while Abana and Pharpar are clear and beautiful rivers, the Jordan is muddy and repulsive!

(4.) To learn also as far as possible the personal history of every known author of the Bible, together with their distinctive characteristics, both as men and writers, will often render invaluable aid in unfolding their words.

What force is added to Peter's words, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble," by interpreting them under the sad light of his self-sufficiency and denial!

(5.) It is necessary to understand the character, beliefs, and spiritual condition of those addressed in any prophecy, epistle, or speech in order to interpret correctly and intelligibly. There are also features of the Gospels that become clear only when we keep in view the persons for whom the evangelists immediately wrote.

What light is thrown on the epistle to the Galatians by learning that the Galatians were of the same race as the Gauls; noted for their ardor, impulsiveness and fickleness! We could not understand the sermon on the mount unless we at first became acquainted with the prevalent notions of the Jews, when it was uttered; e. g., their views of oaths, etc.

(6.) The preacher must interpret his text in the light of the context, if he would apprehend the precise thought that its author intended to convey. The neglect of this has given rise to much false interpretation. Single sentences have been torn from the web of the passages in which they stand, and made to teach that which

the isolated words may suggest, but which the context clearly condemns.

E. g., Acts xxvi. 28. Agrippa's words were probably ironical; yet they are often used as if spoken seriously. Isa. i. 5, 6 is interpreted as teaching the doctrine of total depravity. Col. ii. 21 is made to teach total abstinence from intoxicating drink, whereas the apostle is remonstrating against the imposition of ascetic observances on Christians. From Acts xviii. 17, men have euded the topic, "The Indifference of Worldlings to Religion." From the words, "There appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with him," Massillon drew the subject, "The Respect which the Great owe to Religion." 'Moses and Elias,' he said, 'are the two greatest personages of the ancient law; now in descending beside the Saviour they rendered him homage; thus the great owe respect to religion.'—(See "The Preacher and the King," pp. 257 and 258. Also the words of Antonio Vieyra, "Mediæval Preaching," p. 334, seq.)

(7.) Texts must be interpreted according to the analogy of faith. E. g., ought we not to interpret Matt. viii. 17, as teaching that Christ bore away our infirmities by bearing away the cause of them, viz., our sins, even though the interpretation be harsh?

(8.) Allegorical interpretations must be avoided, except in passages where they are clearly demanded. If the text naturally offers only a literal sense, and there is no evidence that the writer intended anything further, the preacher must not go beyond it. The violation of this principle gives loose rein to lawless fancy, and makes the impression that the Scriptures teach little or nothing definitely, or anything according to the whim of the expounder.

Nor should we seek types of Christ, of the church, and of Christian experience in everything under the old dispensation; whenever the New Testament points them out, we may implicitly follow its guidance; but beyond this it is not safe to go.

The manna, the water from the rock, Moses, David, Melchisedec, the sacrifices, etc., are types of Christ. Jerusalem is a type of the church, Sarah and Hagar are types of the freedom of the Gospel, and bondage of the law etc.

(9.) Personal experience of the truth is necessary for every part of the preacher's work; but as spiritual things can only be discerned spiritually, it is most imperatively demanded in interpreting those texts which enfold the mysteries of the gospel, the great doctrines that pertain to salvation.

Luther held that "Faith, and faith alone can expound Scripture. . . . What is expressed by the letter is something spiritual, and hence Scripture can only be understood by a kindred mind and spirit." (See Theological Eclectic, vol. iv., p. 490, an article by Dr. Dorner.)

CHAPTER III.

SUBJECTS FOR SERMONS.

As the great work of the Christian preacher is to unfold and enforce the truths of the Bible, any theme which is not or cannot be educed from the inspired word is manifestly unfit for the Christian sermon. This, however, needs still further limitation; for one might discuss in a scientific manner the archæology and style of the Scriptures, or the facts which they present, belonging to history or physical science, and claim, with some show of fairness, that his discourses were evolved from the inspired writings; but while we should use our knowledge of such subjects to elucidate God's word, the formal discussion of them should never be introduced into the pulpit. We observe, then, —

I. That the preacher is restricted for the subjects of his sermons to the truths or doctrines of the divine word, in distinction from the diction in which they are expressed, and from the outward facts which have attached themselves to them during their history. These doctrines are the teachings of the Bible concerning, *first*, the Being and Attributes of God, the Salvation of Man, the Church, the Providence of God, Angels and Evil Spirits, the End of the World, the Judgment, etc.; and, *second*, the Duties which men owe to God and to one another.

Subjects defining the latter are usually called, in scientific treatises, moral subjects. While such a classification is convenient, it seems to imply that what the Scriptures teach concerning duty is not doctrine. It is, however, as truly so as their utterances concerning atonement or justification, since the New Testament conception of doctrine is simply inspired teaching. If we adopt the ordinary scientific classification, we are compelled to treat Repentance, Faith, Love, Conversion, Baptism, etc., both as doctrines and duties, according to the point of view which we may for the moment assume. The real distinction is not between doctrines and duties,

but between classes of doctrines; the one claims belief, the other both belief and outward action; or, if we speak with our eye on the fundamental relation of the two, we may say that the latter is the effluence of the former; that all doctrines which demand both belief and outward action, flow from the more fundamental, which lay claim to belief alone. Thus the most abstruse doctrines pertaining to God, or his work of redemption, unfold into duty, while every duty roots itself in doctrine. The maxim of the Reformers was, "Doctrines must be preached practically, and duties doctrinally."

(1.) *Apologetical Subjects.* When attacks on Christianity are of such a character as to weaken its claims on the mind of the community, the pastor may preach apologetically. In such sermons, however, the indirect method is decidedly preferable. If, e. g., the Divinity of Christ were denied, it would be best to put in an indirect defence, by presenting that doctrine sustained by the strongest and most popular arguments, so as to secure the great practical ends of preaching, the salvation of the impenitent, and the perfecting of the believer. Thus two objects would be accomplished at once, and in a manner which tends to repress rather than to excite the spirit of controversy either in the preacher or others.

This is the process of absorption; evil is overcome by the prevalence of good, darkness by light. Let a man, holding the truth in the exact relations that Paul did (2 Tim. iii. 16), preach on the inspiration of the Scriptures; he would both defend them, and incite Christians to rely confidently on them as an all-sufficient guide to complete, final salvation.

If, however, the direct method should be chosen, real success can be secured only by dissecting so thoroughly the error combated as to reveal to every candid hearer its pernicious character.

If one states errors that he does not conclusively refute, he fosters what he would extirpate. The direct method ought to be adopted with caution.

Under this head, the pastor may be called upon to present faithfully the teachings of the Scriptures relative to the proper administration and order of the ordinances. If this be stigmatized as polemical preaching, he must not on that account omit it; but the

polemical spirit ought to be avoided. It is not generally necessary to mention the views of others, but if they are referred to, care must be taken to represent them fairly, and without a trace of bitterness.

(2.) *Subjects which present Special Duties.*

It is perfectly clear that the expounder of the Scriptures, if he is faithful to his trust, must set forth the duties that we owe to God and man. The duties of all to God, of church members to one another and the world, the mutual duties of husbands and wives, of parents and children, of masters and servants, of rulers and subjects, of buyers and sellers, are all clearly taught in the Scriptures, with an iteration and emphasis which attest their great importance. When properly treated such topics never appear out of place in the pulpit. If dis severed from the doctrines of salvation through Christ, their discussion is as fitting to a Mohammedan mosque, or a school of heathen philosophy, as to the Christian church. The apostles always enforced them by motives drawn directly from the cross.

Political subjects, as a rule, ought to be avoided ; but when great moral principles are involved in political issues, it sometimes becomes the duty of the pulpit to discuss them. Such discussion, however, should be conducted with entire freedom from party spirit, and with the calm dignity of an ambassador of Christ, sent to pour the light of divine truth upon the heated and bitter conflicts of political partisans ; moreover, if it be possible, the preacher should avoid taking sides.

(3.) *Historical Subjects.* A large part of the Scriptures is history, and the preacher must not neglect its teachings ; but he must narrate the historical events, and analyze and depict the historical characters, of the Bible, for the sole purpose of teaching and enforcing truth. To the great mass of men this is the most fascinating and effective way of preaching.

(4.) *Experimental Subjects.* The doctrines of the Scriptures are illustrated in the experiences of men ; and since experience of divine truth in its endless diversity is at bottom a unit, subjects which lead us to portray that of a single believer kindle the liveliest interest in all. Such topics tend to clarify the believer's conceptions of truth and to establish him in it ; for as doctrine results in expe-

rience, so experience irradiates doctrine. The more deeply doctrine is felt, and the more clearly it is seen, the more ardently it is loved, and the more tenaciously it is held.

(5.) *Subjects suggested by passing Events.* Passing events, which absorb the thoughts of the people, will often suggest appropriate subjects for the pulpit ; the wise pastor will not fail to discuss them. Yet he ought so to treat them as to revivify and exalt the truth of the Scriptures. He should strive to make the impression that the truth of God is of infinitely greater importance than any event of time.

CHAPTER IV.

DIFFERENT SPECIES OF SERMONS.

THE most exhaustive analysis reduces sermons to three kinds, viz., the Expository, Textual, and Topical.

I. Expository sermons.

(1.) An expository sermon is a discourse made up mainly of exposition; yet since its design is not only to instruct, but also to move the will, it must be rhetorical in form. This distinguishes it from mere comment.

It may be the exposition of a long or short passage. A single verse of Scripture, when both difficult and important, may demand the time ordinarily allotted to a sermon for its elucidation and the application of its truth.

Expository sermons correspond to the character of the passages from which they are developed. If the passage is historical, then the main effort will be to reproduce it by vivid narration, and to deduce its lessons; if devotional or doctrinal, to unfold the thought in order to kindle devotion, or to instruct, confirm in the faith, and lead to duty.

(2.) Things which specially commend this species of sermon.

(a.) It was the usual though not exclusive form of discourse in the primitive church. Antiquity alone might not be a recommendation of much value, but the same reasons which made it so useful in the early church exist substantially now.

(b.) As interpreters we are bound, so far as possible, to unfold the whole of God's word; we can do this most effectually by copious exposition.

(c.) The preacher needs to produce such sermons for his own benefit. By preparing them he becomes acquainted with, and able to present, the doctrines of the Gospel in their scriptural relations, accumulates the best material for topical sermons, and is made so

familiar with the divine word that by it he can easily test the scripturalness of material drawn from other sources.

(d.) His hearers need expository sermons in order to increase their interest in, and knowledge of, the Scriptures. Many of them have no taste for the study of the Bible, and need to have it awakened; some, who possess it, may lack the time, or the ability to search out the meaning of Scripture, or may be destitute of books necessary for its elucidation.

(3.) Rules for the construction of an expository sermon.

Unity is the fundamental law in every species of oratorical discourse. It is necessary for instruction, conviction, and persuasion. Hence,—

(a.) The passage chosen for exposition must possess unity; its thought must be complete in itself.

(b.) By a thorough study of it in the original, if possible, and always under the stimulus of the best helps that can be obtained, its leading thought must be firmly grasped and disentangled from the web of the passage, and made the nucleus of discourse. Around this central thought all the remaining material of the passage naturally groups itself.

(c.) In the construction of the discourse, the language of the passage must be explained only so far as is necessary to set its entire thought in the clearest light. To go a step beyond this will retard the movement of the discourse with useless material.

Too much explanation of words and phrases is a worse error than too little. The processes by which we have arrived at our knowledge of the thoughts of the passage must not be obtruded on our audience; we must leave our exegetical chips in our studies.

(d.) When the minor thoughts of the passage are numerous, attention must be directed only to those most necessary for the truthful presentation and enforcement of the main thought. To remark on them all would make the sermon prolix, wearisome, and endanger its unity.

(e.) Discourse from material foreign to the passage in hand should not be built up on the separate thoughts brought out and incorporated in the sermon. When this is done the discourse is no longer simply expository, but textual.

(f.) The thoughts of the passage may be applied as they are successively brought to light, provided that such application is always brief. To spin out such applications stops progress and destroys interest. But the application of the main thought should be reserved for the conclusion, as in any other discourse.

(4.) General suggestions.

(a.) Success in expository preaching can be secured only by the most thorough preparation.

(b.) Since man's religious nature must always respond to Bible truth, expository sermons, thoroughly prepared, cannot fail to interest. Some of the most popular preachers of the past expounded largely. Such a sermon has also oratorical movement; the mind is hurried on from thought to thought,—a thing which is always agreeable, often exciting.

(c.) Such sermons ought not to be announced beforehand, as if they were something extraordinary, but presented like others, as though such preaching were a matter of course.

(d.) If a text is taken which involves in its elucidation the entire context, an expository sermon is the necessary result; to treat such texts often and well will soon overcome the most inveterate prejudice of any congregation against expository preaching.

(e.) When the construction of such sermons has become comparatively easy, the exposition of an entire book may be undertaken. Such discourses may be announced as lectures on some general topic; e.g., if one wishes to expound the book of Joshua, he can announce a course of lectures on "The Subjugation of Canaan."

(f.) Topics for series of expository sermons.

The Life, or some part of the Life of our Lord; The Life and Labors of Paul; The History of Abraham or Joseph; The Bondage and Deliverance of the Children of Israel; The Judges; The Ten Commandments; The Parables; The Miracles; The Beatitudes; The Sermon on the Mount, etc.

(g.) Specimens of expository discourse: Chrysostom's Homilies; Leighton on 1 Pet.; Luther on Galatians; Chalmers on Romans; Paul the Preacher, by Eadie; Elijah the Tishbite, Suffering Saviour, and David, by Krummacher; Monod's Five Sermons on the Apostle Paul; The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church, by R. W. Dale.

II. Textual sermons.

(1.) A textual sermon is a discourse confined to the development and enforcement of the thoughts expressed by the different words, or phrases, or sentences of a text. It should have a definite subject in which there is unity; but the divisions of the subject are suggested by the parts of the text rather than by logical analysis. If, as is rarely the case, the logical divisions and those of the text coincide, the result is, in fact, a textual-topical sermon; yet it will be textual or topical to its author, according as the text or logical analysis suggested to him its divisions.

It is not necessary in such a discourse to follow the *order* of the clauses of the text; but the order of treatment should be such as will secure the highest unity, provided that by disregarding the order of the parts of the text no violence is done to its teaching.

(2.) Such sermons are commended by the closeness of the connection between them and the texts from which they are unfolded.

(3.) Some examples of textual treatment:—

In the sixth series of Spurgeon's sermons, the seventh sermon is based on Ps. ii. 12: "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

1st. The command "Kiss the Son."

2d. The argument used, "Lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way," etc.

3d. The benediction with which the text closes: "Blessed, etc. This benediction being the second reason why we should obey the command.

This is faulty; 2d and 3d are subordinate to 1st. The treatment which most perfectly realizes unity would be,—

The command; explain what is implied in it. Then notice the motives to its obedience.

1st. The Lord's anger against those who refuse to obey.

2d. His blessing bestowed on those who obey.

Or, treat the words, "Kiss the Son," as an exhortation; explain what men are exhorted in these words to do, and then urge the motives to yield to this exhortation. 1st. Christ's anger against those who refuse. 2d. His blessing on those who submit to him.

In Williams' *Miscellanies*, p. 311, there is a sermon, the title of which is, "The Lessons of Calamity." It is based on Luke xiii. 4-5.

(1.) All of us are sinners.

Christ's hearers were such as well as the Galileans, the survivors as well as the sufferers, and we as well as those whose death we deplore.

(2.) All of us are liable to sudden death.

(3.) Death to the impenitent sinner is destruction.

(4.) Repentance is our only safeguard from eventual ruin.

This is admirable, but requires close attention to see how it is developed from the parts of the text.

In Dabney's *Lectures on Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 218, there is the following plan,—1 Cor. i. 30: "Who (Christ) of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." The proposition is, "Christ is made of God our Salvation." Because he is the source (1.) of our sufficient illumination, (2.) of our justification, (3.) of our purification, and (4.) (conclusion by summary) thus of our complete redemption."

The word "sufficient" under (1.) ought not to be there; it belongs to the explanation, not to the division itself.

Matt. xi. 28. (Mine) Subject; Christ promises the burdened sinner rest.

(1.) A class of sinners is described; "Ye that labor and are heavy laden."

(2.) To such Christ promises rest:—"I will give you rest." What is meant by this rest?

(3.) He promises it on condition of faith, "*Come unto me.*"

Here the order of the clauses is not followed.

All texts, however, will not admit of such treatment. Whenever the separate parts of a text do not suggest a just division of the subject involved in them, the subject must take the form of a definite proposition, the divisions of which are suggested by logical analysis. The theme being determined, its discussion is untrammelled by any further reference to the outward form of the text. Sermons thus produced are called,—

III. Topical sermons.

This kind of sermon comes most readily under the laws for the

construction of an oratorical discourse. It is by pre-eminence the Christian oration. Yet it presents stronger temptations than any other to cut loose from the Scriptures.

It is almost universally the method of the French pulpit. The French Catholic preachers especially were ingenious in getting rid of their texts.

In addition to the differences above noted, these three kinds of sermons differ also in the relative proportions of analysis and synthesis. Analysis is predominant in the expository discourse, which, however, is not destitute of synthesis. Synthesis is predominant in textual and topical sermons, while analysis lies at their foundation ; but notwithstanding these differences, they have so much in common that the most fundamental laws for the construction of a logical and oratorical discourse are applicable to them all.

CHAPTER V.

EXPLICATION.

I. THE exegesis of the text. This is demanded when the text may not be readily understood by an ordinary audience. Moreover, if a text, on account of its very familiarity, fails suitably to impress our hearers, it is desirable to put its thought into new forms, or in some way to revivify its terms, so that its truth may assume, to those who hear it, its real importance. We cannot exercise too great care in this work; but we must remember that our object is not exegesis, but to instruct and move men; we must therefore take into the pulpit only so much of our exegetical work as is absolutely necessary to set the truth of the text in the strongest light. Results rather than processes of exegesis are generally all that is demanded.

II. Explication of facts, both physical and moral.

(1.) Narration. This is not simply recital, but rather the statement of such incidents as tend to illustrate or substantiate any given truth in an oratorical discourse. In the pulpit it becomes (*a.*) a part of exegesis, when exegesis goes beyond the bare elucidation of words, and presents the manners and customs, or portrays the character of the speaker or hearers referred to in the text or context. As the advocate begins his plea by narrating all the events which bear on his case, in other words, by stating his case, so the preacher may often begin his sermon by narrating or stating all the circumstances which throw light on the truth of his text; and his success in convincing his hearers will often largely depend on the justness and clearness of his narration.

(*b.*) He must also narrate whenever he introduces into his discourse any incident from either sacred or profane history, or from common life. If the incident is well known, the narration must be very brief; if little known, it must be full.

(*c.*) In historical exposition the chief part of the discourse is narration.

Narration must be strictly subordinate to the truth which it is the design of the discourse to enforce. We must not narrate for the sake of so doing; however interesting a fact may be which is involved in the narration of an event, if it does not bear directly upon the preacher's object, it should be rejected.

(2.) Description. This, like narration, (*a.*) often finds its place in exegesis. He who has the power faithfully to reproduce in his own mind, and to depict the scenes of Scripture so that his audience will see them, possesses one of the best gifts for the popular exposition of the Bible. Description so employed throws a new charm around the divine word, and attracts the attention of the people to its truths; e. g., he who is able to paint the desolate and rugged grandeur of Sinai could not fail thereby to increase in his hearers the sense of the majesty and holiness of God and his law; such descriptions help us to feel the full force of the miracles, etc.

(*b.*) The description of the effects of virtue or vice in an individual or a nation is usually the most emphatic way of commending the one and condemning the other.

But painting a scene for its own sake is the work of an artist rather than of an orator; description, like narration, must simply serve the truth; whenever it steps beyond this, it becomes a pulpit pest. Mere word-painting is as much out of place in the pulpit as gingerbread-work in a church edifice.

Narration and description are sometimes more or less mingled; narration has more of movement, description more of vividness; the former, on account of its movement, is more oratorical; but the vividness of the latter compensates in part for its lack of progress.

III. Explication of ideas.

From the facts of divine revelation ideas are evolved. The great work of preaching is to set forth these ideas in their various relations and applications; but this cannot be done unless they are sharply defined in the mind of the preacher, and he is able clearly to define them for others. This leads us to ask, —

(1.) What is a definition? The etymology of the word suggests the answer; it is from *de finire*, to mark out limits. It lays down the boundary of an idea so as to separate it from all other ideas, and makes known its essential and constituent elements. It must

be distinguished from a judgment which affirms or denies something of a given object or idea ; which attributes to an idea " something not directly implied in it, and thus increases our knowledge." (Thomson, *Outlines of Laws of Thought*, p. 194.) E. g., " Faith is the substance of things hoped for," is a synthetic judgment. We can think of faith without thinking of this power which it possesses to give present subsistence to things unseen. When we exhibit simply the constituent elements of faith we have a definition ; when we affirm that it gives *reality* to things for which we hope, we attribute to it a notion not hitherto associated with it ; such an affirmation is a judgment.

(2.) When may a definition be called good?

(a.) When it renders the idea defined clearer than it was before the definition was given.

(b.) When it presents nothing more nor less than is contained in the idea.

(3.) What form of definition is best adapted to Christian discourse?

The character of the sermon and of the audience will in a measure determine this. If the discourse is doctrinal, it requires closer, sharper definition ; if the audience is comparatively illiterate, the direct and simple definition must be supplemented with the indirect, or the combined definition must be employed. In the indirect we repeat the idea in different forms ; in the combined we bring out some related or opposing idea which throws light on the one we desire to present and enforce. In fact, the indirect or combined definition is freer and more oratorical, and when the subject admits of it, it is to be preferred for any audience. The general law is to avoid too great formality and subtilty in definition, as prejudicial to movement and perspicuity, and to avoid defining both that which is already sufficiently clear, and those ideas which are either too simple or too lofty and mysterious to admit of definition. — (See Vinet on the law and the manner in which an idea may be defined, pp. 165 to 168.)

(4.) The importance of definition. It imparts definite notions of the subject under discussion, and the preacher's success in demonstration usually depends on his success in definition.

CHAPTER VI.

ARGUMENTS.

REASONING ought always to hold a large place in the pulpit. Even though it be the privilege and duty of the preacher as an ambassador of Christ to announce the truths of inspiration with confidence and authority, yet argumentation is often required to show that the inspired record really teaches what he announces, to point out the application of general truths either of Scripture or consciousness to specific cases, to refute errors, to reveal to believers the foundations of the doctrines which they hold, so as to increase their confidence in these verities, and render them capable of giving to others suitable reasons for their faith, and to show how that conclusions legitimately drawn from the facts of consciousness or from truths universally admitted, accord with and sustain the teachings of the gospel.

All that elucidates and enforces the subject of the discourse is usually called, in works on rhetoric, proof or argument; but we wish to consider argument in its stricter sense, or rather arguments, as to their *nature* and *forms*.

I. Arguments as to their Essential Nature.

(1.) The *à priori* argument. In this argument we reason from cause to effect; the conclusion or result is certain, if the cause be real, and nothing intervenes to thwart its effect; e. g., A is a Christian, therefore he will act benevolently towards the poor; i. e., there is something in a Christian which necessarily leads to such a result. Or, A is murdered and robbed. B is suspected of the murder; to prove his guilt, it is argued that he is known to have coveted A's property. (Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, lib. v., cap. 11; Fleming's *Vocabulary of Philos.*, p. 40.) The conclusion in either case is only probable, since, in the first, A's Christian benevolence may in some way have been prevented from acting itself out; and in the second, the covetous desire of B may not have so overborne

his sense of justice as to lead him to commit the crime ; or some one else who coveted A's property may have shed his blood.

Some extend the *à priori* argument to include arguments drawn from necessary principles. This is correct only when such principles are the causes of the results attributed to them. They may be simply universal facts, principles which in all cases hold true. (For different uses of the term, see Fleming's Vocab. of Philosophy, pp. 41 and 42, and Broadus' Prep. and Deliv. of Sermons, p. 177-179.)

(2.) The *à posteriori* argument. In this we reason from the effect to the cause ; e. g., when we see a radical change in a man's entire course of life, we conclude that some power must have transformed his nature and implanted new tastes ; as no finite power is equal to the task, we conclude that it has been effected by God.

(3.) The argument from Testimony.

Testimony "is the declaration of one who professes to know the truth of that which he affirms." (Locke, *Flem. Voc. Phil.*, pp. 5-8.) Strictly speaking it should be employed to prove only matters of fact. In this argument, we must specially scrutinize the character of the things concerning which the testimony is given, whether they belong to science or common life, the intelligence and moral character of the witnesses, the number of them, whether their testimony is independent or the result of collusion, whether it is given under compulsion, or voluntarily, whether under excitement and hurriedly, or with coolness and deliberation.

This argument is only probable, since the testimony may be modified or vitiated by so many attendant circumstances ; but the probability is often so strong as to be practically equal to certainty.

(4.) Argument from Authority.

In this argument the views or judgments of men are adduced to establish a supposed truth, or matter of opinion. We must not only ask as to an author's integrity, and capability of giving an intelligent and authoritative judgment concerning any given case, but also whether, admitting his honesty and capability, there was anything in his relations or circumstances that tended to bias his mind. Both testimony and authoritative judgments, when given in accordance with a manifest bias, are weakened in proportion to the strength of that bias ; but when given contrary to it, in the same proportion their weight is increased.

But the preacher's great authority is the Bible; every passage written within it, which was inspired by the Spirit, he knows to be an unerring judgment, and it is to him the end of controversy on every question concerning which it makes a clear declaration.

The arguments from testimony and authority are often naturally confounded; since the utterance of a man in relation to a matter of opinion, or a matter of fact, may be popularly called, in either case, his testimony, and is so called in the courts.

(5.) The argument from Analogy.

Analogy, when applied to argument, indicates resemblance in the relations which different objects bear to the same object or corresponding objects; e. g., the relation of A to B is identical with, or resembles, that of C to D. The objects sustaining these relations may be similar or dissimilar. The camel is the ship of the desert. Here the objects are widely dissimilar, but the relation of the camel to the desert resembles that of the ship to the sea. (See also John xv. 4.)

When the well-known relation between two objects leads to a conclusion which all admit, we reason that the same or a like relation between two other objects must lead to a similar result.

If we cannot positively demonstrate a truth by such an argument, we can show it to be probable, and this argument can also be effectively employed in refutation; e. g., Butler's Analogy.

Two common errors, however, must be carefully avoided.

(a.) The founding of the argument on the similarity of objects, instead of on the similarity of their respective relations to some other object, or corresponding objects; as one bases an argument for the resurrection on the similarity between the chrysalis in its web and the body wrapped in its winding-sheet, in the grave, and on that between the butterfly which unfolds from the chrysalis and the resurrection body; while the relation of the chrysalis,—an insect in a process of growth, and hence retaining the principle of life,—to the butterfly, must be essentially different from the relation of a body absolutely dead to the resurrection body, into which it shall be quickened.

(b.) Because there is resemblance in the relations of different objects in a single point, we must not conclude that it extends to all points. There may be no resemblance except in one single

respect. And if there were many points in which the objects sustained like relations to each other, we must urge only that one which is essential to our argument in any given case. This principle should constantly be borne in mind in discourses on the parables.

While this argument is liable to abuse, it is oratorical, and should be often employed. While it often affords probable proof, it also illustrates truth, and renders it interesting.

(6.) The inductive argument.

Induction is the process of drawing a general conclusion or principle from a number of individual facts. There must be, however, a sufficient number to warrant such a conclusion. A single fact in natural science is often sufficient to justify a generalization. (See Whately's *Rhetoric*, Amer. Ed., p. 54.) But in reference to human society and religious truth, the case is far different; here we must often bring together a large number of examples before we can deduce with any degree of certainty a general truth. We need to be on our guard against hasty generalizations. While inductions from individual cases may be justly made, examples are often best employed to confirm the conclusions reached by other processes of reasoning.

(7.) The deductive argument.

This consists in drawing a particular truth from a general principle already known. The known principle may have been ascertained by induction, or it may be a fact of consciousness, or it may be a mental or moral intuition.

Consciousness (from *con-scire*, joint-knowing, a knowledge of one thing in connection or relation with another) is the knowledge which the mind has of its own operations. It knows that it experiences certain emotions and passions; it knows that it wills. Thus, in reasoning with unbelievers, we may make use of the fact that they are conscious of rebellion against God's law; or, in answering the objection that God's sovereignty overrides the freedom of man, we may appeal to the fact that no man was ever conscious of any such interference with his personal freedom, and make that the basis of our argument. Facts of consciousness also may form the basis of arguments when we treat of Christian experience, especially if we address ourselves to believers.

Intuition (from *intueri*, to behold) is a mental act by which truth is immediately perceived without conscious analysis, or a process of reasoning. We know it by looking at it; e. g., a mathematical axiom. This is a mental intuition. The immediate perception of a moral truth is a moral intuition; e. g., we know without any process of reasoning that sin should be punished and virtue rewarded. The pulpit ought to have much to do with these truths of consciousness and of intuition. If we begin any process of reasoning with them, we cannot but have our hearer's assent at the start, and if we are careful to make deductions which are strictly logical, provided we do not repel by our style or elocution, we ought to hold our auditors to the end. But as this is pure reasoning, we must be careful to test the results at each step by facts, in order to assure ourselves that our deductions are in strict accordance with known truth.

It should be borne in mind that, in reasoning, different kinds of arguments may properly be mingled together.

It is also important, in any discussion, to determine on whom the burden of proof lies. We have two principles for our guidance.

(1.) No one can be justly called upon to prove a negative, even if it were possible; e. g., it would be manifestly improper to ask a man to prove that his doctrine was not heretical, and if he should undertake so to do, even though it were unquestionably sound, he might waken grave suspicion against it.

(2.) He who affirms a thing is bound to show the reason of his affirmation. If he does not, and objections are urged against it, it is overthrown, since no truth rests on mere human assertion. If one presents the proof of what he alleges, and another objects to the thing supposed to be proved, he must show the ground of his objections, or they are only so much breath. These principles are simple and universal in their application. Men in the ordinary course of life, and in all our courts, by common consent, conform to them.

When Whately teaches that the presumption is always in favor of preoccupation, he lays down a principle the application of which leads to confusion, contradiction and error. (See Carson on Baptism, ch. I., where the archbishop's argument is literally dissected; also Day's Art of Discourse, p. 158, where he lays down the principle that "He who alleges must prove;" while in the remainder of his article he partially follows the unsound principle of Whately.)

II. Arguments as to their Form.

It is not our purpose to refer to all the forms of argument, but rather to point out the more common and oratorical.

(1.) The argument *à fortiori*. In this we reason from the greater to the less. If a thing be true in a case less probable, it will certainly be true in one more probable. This argument is usually a form of the argument from analogy; e. g., Mal. i. 6-8; Matt. vii. 9-11; Rom. v. 10. (For further scriptural examples, see Vinet, p. 195, and for examples from Cicero, p. 194.)

(2.) That of Progressive Approach.

This is in fact an inductive argument. We reason from an effect, as it appears in a number of examples, increased or diminished according as the cause is gradually freed from obstructions, or rendered less operative, to the completeness or entire absence of that effect when the cause acts without obstruction, or is entirely removed; e. g., it is observed that as true holiness increases in communities, the more perfect is their peace; it is inferred, therefore, that when holiness becomes complete, absolute peace will be the result. It is observed that as sin is diminished, contentions decrease; we conclude, therefore, that when sin is entirely removed, contentions will wholly cease.

An ordinary audience will usually feel the full force of the two foregoing arguments, and the true orator or preacher will hardly fail to avail himself of them whenever they will subserve his purpose.

(3.) *Reductio ad absurdum*.

In this we grant a principle that we wish to refute, and show that when legitimately carried out it inevitably leads to that which is absurd; e. g., when it is argued that farmers ought not to raise barley, because whiskey is distilled from it, we may admit the argument, and show that it then follows that they should abstain from raising corn, wheat, rye, or anything which may be made to administer to intoxication, — which is of course absurd.

Many things may be shown to be absurd by simply stripping them of all that is adventitious; e. g., the Pope is the vicar of Christ on earth. The absurdity of this is shown by relating in plain words what the Pope is, how he lives, and what he does. (See also Ps. cxv. 4-7.)

This argument finds its use in refuting an opponent, in exploding false maxims of society, and sometimes in substantiating a principle, by showing that any principle opposed or contrary to the one advocated, leads to absurdity. In fact the argument from *ablation*, by which we show the desirableness of one thing by revealing the bad effects of its opposite, belongs to *reductio ad absurdum*. We prove the excellence of virtue by portraying the fearful effects of vice. Such a mode of argument seems natural, and will usually impress the minds of men more forcibly than to dwell on the beneficent results of that which we seek to commend.

(4.) *Argumentum ad hominem*.

In this we show that a man's words or conduct in the past is opposed to some principle which he now advocates. In such a case, we should acknowledge that he may have honestly changed his views; but we may also show that the circumstances which then surrounded him were more favorable to a correct judgment on the question at issue, than his present surroundings; e. g., John Foster in his dotage expressed doubts concerning the eternal future punishment of the wicked. A man might have opposed to him his earlier views, and have shown that those views held by him in the full vigor of his powers were more likely to be correct than those which he entertained when enfeebled by age.

The argument *ex concessio* really belongs under this head; from something conceded by an opponent, or by our auditors, we may fairly deduce that which will refute some other principle held by them, or we may build upon it a positive argument for some truth that we desire to enforce.

III. In the use of argument we must be careful:—

(1.) To avoid reasoning too abstractly, lest from lack of metaphysical training our hearers may not understand us.

(2.) To avoid too exclusive argumentation, lest our audiences become wearied and inattentive, even though they understand.

(3.) To make use of the simplest and most popular arguments.

CHAPTER VII.

ILLUSTRATION.

THE object of Illustration is to render a truth which has been stated or proved, clear, interesting and impressive. It belongs, according to the usual terminology of rhetoricians, to the proof or argument of discourse; and it is not always distinct from argument in the narrower and stricter sense. It will be convenient to notice then, —

(1.) That illustration and argument are sometimes identical in form.

We have already seen that an argument from analogy is also an illustration. Take this example from Aristotle. "Surely," said an Athenian orator, "you would not choose the chief magistrate by *lot*; you might as well choose the pilot of a vessel by *lot*." The relation of the pilot to the ship is like that of a magistrate to the State; and as it would be absurd to choose a man by *lot* for so responsible a post as that of a pilot, it would be still more absurd to choose a magistrate in that manner. The argument is forcible, but its illustrative power is equally so.

Moreover, an example has the force of an argument, provided that the object appealed to really resembles in itself and in its circumstances that which we desire to prove. In such a case it may furnish a sufficient basis for a sound induction; but at the same time that it proves, it also illustrates. But while this is true, a speaker usually introduces an analogy, or an example with a single aim, either for proof or illustration; if for proof, he regards its illustrative force as simply incidental; if for illustration, its argumentative force as incidental. Yet he cannot consider it unimportant to know all the elements of force that are contained in any given analogy or example, so that he may wittingly avail himself of them.

(2.) Let us now notice that which is mere illustration; e. g., if

we say the soul of the believer feeds on Christ, as the body feeds on bread, or that the union between Christ and believers is as intimate and vital as that between the vine and its branches, we simply illustrate. There is a resemblance in the relations of the objects here compared, and we may argue from this resemblance, if we choose; but we have here confined the analogies to pure illustration. But where there is strong resemblance between objects, though no real resemblance in their relations, we may use the one to illustrate the other; e. g., the difference between the seed and the flower, between the grub and the butterfly, may illustrate the difference between the dead body of the believer and his resurrection body. The parable of the sower merely illustrates the manner in which different persons hear the gospel. See also 1 Peter i. 24.

Most invented examples, and very many authentic ones, never amount to proof; yet they may illustrate; e. g., we might prove that Christianity disposes men to repair the wrongs inflicted by them, and illustrate it by Zaccheus. The vital point to be guarded is, never to present as argument that which is simply illustration.

(3.) Illustration must be kept subservient to thought.

It is often embellishment, and when drawn from our social relations tends to quicken the sensibilities, but he who introduces it merely for these ends perverts it; its main object being to make thought clear and impressive. It must always be kept strictly subservient to this great end. The moment it fails to add to the perspicuity and force of thought, it becomes a burden and impediment; and if it be in and of itself specially attractive, it entices the hearer away from the thought of the discourse, substituting for it only its own illusive fascination.

Yet it is of the first importance. Many are able to grasp and retain the thought of discourse only by its illustrations, which, when they strictly subserve their end, are always pleasing to the most cultivated. Many of the most popular preachers of the world have freely employed illustration; e. g., Basil the Great, Chrysostom, Segneri, Christmas Evans, Beecher, Spurgeon.

(4.) The sources of illustration.

(a.) The natural world. There is scarcely an object of the

universe which may not be used to throw light on religious truth. A preacher should keep his eyes open, that he may constantly enrich his fund of illustration from the natural world. Christ's illustrations from this source are copious. Natural objects are familiar to the people, and consequently illustrations drawn from them are quickly apprehended and forcible.

(b.) Human society in all its multifarious departments and relations. Men should be studied as they are seen in the family, the church, in their various callings and pursuits, and in their acts as neighbors, citizens and politicians. He who so studies them will find many apt and telling illustrations for the pulpit.

(c.) Not only men, but also their pursuits, should be observed. Mechanical processes, the mechanism and movement of machinery, the work of agriculturalists and sailors, the professional labors of lawyers and physicians, all yield pertinent illustrations for the pulpit.

(d.) History. Illustrations drawn from this source are always attractive. If the people are not familiar with the facts that the preacher wishes to use for this purpose, he must narrate them according to the rule already laid down in the chapter on Explication. Historical incidents may be both instructive and illustrative.

(e.) Science. Here we meet with difficulties. Some illustrations from astronomy and geology have become trite, and should be used sparingly. Yet, on the other hand, there may not be the requisite scientific culture in our hearers to qualify them to appreciate fully many illustrations that may be drawn from this source. In such a case, we must first make a short, simple statement of any scientific fact from which we would draw an illustration, and then use it for our purpose. Such statements should be modest, that we may avoid all appearance of pedantry. We ought not to ignore this source of illustration, especially since the people are making such rapid strides in their knowledge of the physical sciences. The number of those who are attracted and impressed by illustrations from this source is constantly increasing.

(f.) The literature of all ages is also a storehouse of illustration. No living preacher will fail to draw from this source, and especially from the literary works with which his audience may be most familiar.

(g.) Incidents of the day. We should avoid flavoring our discourses too strongly with the newspapers, but to draw a pertinent illustration from some incident to which the mind of the community has been directed during the week, or in which it may have been absorbed, is often very desirable. It will sometimes clinch a truth as nothing else would. But if we take our illustrations from political life, we must be careful not to offend.

(h.) Christian experience, as we observe it in ourselves and others, or learn it from books, may be freely employed. When used with taste and discrimination, it is pleasing to all, and it appeals to most men with peculiar force.

(i.) The Bible. This is doubtless included in the sources of illustration already mentioned, yet it has enough of specialty and importance to claim a separate notice. Men never weary of the Bible, and the fact that its inspiration is generally accredited, gives to illustrations drawn from it a power which belongs to no others. While other mines of illustration should not be neglected, in this the preacher should constantly delve.

(5.) Cautions in the use of illustration.

(a.) Excess of illustration must be avoided. It is used only to make the truth clear, and ought manifestly to be kept subordinate in the discussions of the pulpit. Neglecting this obvious rule, the sermons of some men are nothing but a string of anecdotes. Indolence also doubtless contributes to this result, since the habit once formed, there is nothing easier than to tell stories.

(b.) In illustrations we must be rigidly accurate. If we state as a fact of common life, of some pursuit, or of history, that which is not so, we not only destroy the effect of our illustration on those who detect the mistake, but we get laughed at for our ignorance. Or, if in relating incidents, it may be of Christian experience, we permit ourselves to invent a little in order to round out the story and make it attractive, we may acquire the reputation of drawing on our imagination for our facts, and thus destroy the confidence of the community in our integrity.

CHAPTER VIII.

PERSUASION.

PERSUASION is that element of discourse which most immediately and powerfully incites men to action. This element naturally increases as the orator moves onward in his speech, and often predominates near its close.

It is not then confined to any particular portion of oratorical discourse ; it is the ultimate aim of every genuine speaker from the first word of the Introduction to the last of the Conclusion. In order to persuade, he argues, he illustrates. He proves a thing to be true, and also reveals its goodness, and consequent desirableness. In the former his appeal is specially directed to the intellect, in the latter to the heart. Without the latter, true oratory has no existence. If the speaker does not move the will he leaves his real work unfinished.

Let us inquire : —

(1.) What immediately moves the will? The affections. At all events, we never freely and voluntarily determine to secure an object unless our affection is excited towards it.

(2.) How are the affections elicited? By bringing to the attention certain objects or truths which are exactly fitted to excite them. When such objects or truths are presented under favorable conditions the desired result is quite certain to follow. These aroused affections move the will. This is what is meant by an appeal to motives.

As a man does not love because he wills, but wills because he loves, it follows that you cannot properly and healthfully, if at all, move men by empty exhortation. If you would stir their emotion, which is their affections under special and strong excitement, you must present the truths calculated to awaken them. When, therefore, compact argument is made up largely of such truths, men are often strongly moved by it ; e. g., Edward's sermons on Justifica-

tion by Faith, while severely argumentative, stirred the depths of emotion in his listeners. It must be granted, however, that the natural emotions and sympathies of an audience may be aroused by a speaker of strong personal magnetism, mainly through the power of emotion to propagate itself, or through its contagious power; but as the magnetic speaker and agitated throng are its exciting cause, as soon as the congregation disperses, it is dissipated. It does not last long enough to produce one calm, rational act. If, however, the affections are aroused by a truth lodged in the mind, that truth, independent of extraneous appliances, renews and keeps alive the emotion which produces calm, consistent action.

(3.) The preacher should aim to excite only the moral and religious affections, those that lead men to moral or religious acts, or to seek moral or religious excellence.

We might, with Vinet, divide all motives into those from goodness and happiness; but these motives are seldom separable. An object or truth that excites the affection for goodness, at the same time appeals to that for happiness. The strength of the appeal to the one or the other depends largely on the moral condition of the person to whom the appeal is made. If heaven is held out as the reward of the believer, the regenerate man is induced to struggle for it chiefly because of its goodness, its freedom from sin; the unregenerate, if moved at all, is attracted by its felicity; the believer shudders at hell chiefly on account of its impurity; the unbeliever mainly on account of its torments.

But while these motives are seldom if ever separable, it is right to appeal to the one or the other as we think will best subserve our purpose. The motive from goodness may sometimes be reinforced by that from happiness, and though that from happiness may be the only one which will serve our purpose at first, afterwards it is often replaced by the other. If, therefore, we are forced often to begin, as the Scriptures do, with the motive from happiness, we ought not to abide in it, but use it to bring us to the loftier one of goodness.

We should, however, be on our guard lest we so use the most solemn facts of providence and Revelation as to excite thereby merely natural emotions instead of religious. Death-bed scenes, hell as a place of mere physical torment, and the physical tortures

of the cross, are sometimes so depicted as to awaken nothing beyond natural fear and sympathy. On the other hand, a preacher may so present heaven, or clothe even the sterner truths of Revelation in such poetical drapery, as to awaken only the natural love of the beautiful.

He gratifies the æsthetic taste of his hearers, without stirring in the slightest degree a single religious emotion. He who so preaches may be popular, but he often does lasting injury to souls. The religious element in all such objects as those above mentioned should ever be kept prominent. The physical should indeed be made use of, but always so as to present the moral and religious.

(4.) There are certain objects which, though they do not awaken religious emotions, prepare the way for their awakening; e. g., there is inherent beauty in truth. This, in itself, does not awaken religious affection, but when it secures attention, the truth may awaken it. Beauty laid upon a truth from without, calling attention simply to itself, merely gratifies the taste; intrinsic beauty, fixing the mind upon the truth to which it belongs, may lead directly to the awakening of religious emotion.

The preacher may also touch the feeling of patriotism, or the tenderer affections of domestic life, in order that he may present to hearers thus softened the truths of Revelation, so as to awaken within them the religious affections. (See Ps. ciii. 13; Matt. vii. 11.)

(5.) The emotion of the speaker is a powerful auxiliary in moving men. But his emotion should be such as is enkindled by the truth which he presents; for emotion in propagating itself propagates its own kind; that is, mere natural emotion tends to reproduce itself in others, while religious emotion tends to awaken religious emotion. To excite the former alone is worse than useless, it is injurious. The true preacher is never satisfied if he fails to arouse the latter.

Moreover, his emotion must be real, for only so far forth as it is genuine will it affect others. He cannot assume it, or artificially work it up. When a preacher has some genuine religious emotion, if he attempts to display more than he possesses, he usually loses that which he already has. And we ought also to know that men instinctively detect the spurious in emotion, and when detected, it awakens mingled humor and disgust.

Some think that all appeals to motives are mischievous ; to move a man by such appliances, when he cannot be moved by calm reasoning, is to cause him to act blindly and unreasonably. We reply : —

(a.) That men are often convinced that they ought to act, yet do not, for the want of some incentive beyond that found in pure reasoning ; if the incentive is supplied, they do not act blindly, but as they are already convinced that they should.

(b.) That which is urged against an appeal to the feelings may with equal justice be urged against an appeal to the intellect. If men are sometimes led astray by the former, so are they also by sophistical reasoning, and it is much more difficult to detect the mistake in the latter case than in the former. If a man is deceived under the influence of excessive emotion, when its exciting cause is removed he at once detects his error ; but if deceived by a sophistical argument, he may go hoodwinked to his grave. (See Dabney's Sac. Rhet., p. 236.)

But whatever may be the motives which we present, since our appeal is to natures perverted by sin, it will be insufficient to move men to Christian duty, without the aid of the Spirit. His influence is promised. In this lies the real power of the preacher, and his advantage over all other speakers.

CHAPTER IX.

DISPOSITION.

I. Its importance.

The disposition of the materials of a sermon is scarcely less important than the nature and choice of them.

In every oratorical discourse there is one great object, persuasion or the movement of the will. But as we reach the affections, which immediately move the will only through the intellect,

(1.) Instruction and argument often become necessary. To convey instruction to other minds, or to impress them by reasoning, a natural and just arrangement of thought is indispensable; without this our hearers cannot apprehend our discourse as a whole.

Moreover, where such arrangement is wanting, we may not only fail to be intelligible, but we may also convey erroneous impressions, thus unwittingly teaching error instead of truth.

(2.) To move the will we must not only instruct or argue, but concentrate our entire discourse on a single point. All our thoughts must be successive blows, hitting the same spot like the repeated strokes of a hammer which break the flinty rock. But this can be effected only by the most careful disposition of our material.

(3.) We can never deeply impress others with any subject, so as to move them to action, unless we are first deeply impressed by it ourselves. This necessary impression on our own minds is produced only by a clear, strong grasp of our subject; but we can gain such an apprehension of it only by a thorough disposition of its contents. In the process of arrangement, we see and reject all that does not belong to our theme, discover in it heights and depths unknown to us before, and gain juster conceptions of the relative importance of its various elements. However much we may have read and thought on a subject, in a general way, we can scarcely gain a sharply defined idea of it, without constructing from the materials gathered a well-ordered discourse.

(4.) That legitimate beauty which arises from the structure of the discourse is an element of the force required to move the will; but this beauty is in proportion to the thoroughness and justness of the disposition of our materials.

(5.) If we would move men to act, there must be movement in our discourse. A lack of it, from any cause, will quickly weary and dissipate attention; but this indispensable movement depends on disposition. It is something more than mere continuity; each thought introduced must not only not break the thread of discourse, but must also fully sustain the impression already made, and, if possible, add to that impression.

(a.) Palpable logical defects obstruct or destroy movement, such as co-ordinating that which is subordinate, and vice versa; treating as distinct thoughts different aspects of the same thought, and presenting in one part of a discourse what manifestly belongs in another.

(b.) Digressions also work the same mischief; and the stronger and more beautiful the thought of the digression, the greater the mischief.

(c.) We promote movement by proceeding from that addressed to the understanding to that addressed especially to the will; e. g., by first clearly setting forth a duty, and then urging the motives for its performance. If we engage in argumentation, we must proceed from *à priori* argument to *à posteriori*, from the abstract to the concrete; with arguments of the same kind, from the weaker to the stronger. A simple, positive argument is stronger than a probable one, and when we deal with facts the most important, relative to the case in hand, is the strongest.

II. The Elements of Disposition. These are unity, order, proportion.

(1.) Unity excludes all material foreign to the subject treated. (See Horace's Ep. to the Pisces, lines 1-14.)

(2.) Order so arranges and adjusts the material as to produce continued and accelerated movement, which expends its accumulated force on a single definite point. *Semper ad eventum festinat.*

(3.) Proportion gives to each thought and part of a discourse its relative value, and due space.

The foregoing rules should be observed also in the arrangement of the thoughts which enter into any part or paragraph of a discourse.

But in what part of a discourse can the speaker meet objections, so as to interfere in the smallest degree possible with the law of movement?

All objections, the removal of which does not depend on the argument of the discourse, ought to be removed before we enter on that argument.

Any objection, whose removal depends on any particular argument, ought to be disposed of at the close of said argument.

The objections, however, whose removal rests on the entire argument of the discourse, must be reserved till the close of that argument.

An objection may sometimes be met so as to form a new argument for the truth objected to ; when this can be done progress is not interrupted. Saurin furnishes admirable examples of this.

CHAPTER X.

THE PARTS OF A SERMON.

ARISTOTLE (*Rhetoric*, Book III., ch. xiii.) maintains that in an oration there are only two essential parts, — “The Proposition of the Subject and the Proof.” He teaches that there are two other parts, really distinct and often useful, viz., “The Exordium and Peroration.” But as these parts are usually required to produce the highest possible effect, as they contribute to the force necessary to move the will, they are as essential to the oratorical discourse as the Proposition and Proof. Aristotle’s view is appropriate rather to the philosopher, who aims simply to convince the understanding, than to the orator, whose work is incomplete if he does not move men to action. We conclude, then, that the parts of a sermon are the Exordium or Introduction, the Proposition, the Divisions or Proof, and the Peroration or Conclusion.

I. The Exordium or Introduction.

(1.) Its necessity.

(a.) Since the only introduction often demanded is the clear evolution of the proposition for discussion from the text, when the text is unintelligible or even obscure without explanation, an introduction is of course indispensable.

(b.) The human mind instinctively demands it. It is contrary to our nature and habits to plunge abruptly into the midst of a subject; it is more agreeable to be led into it gradually.

(2.) Its design

(a.) Is to render the audience favorable to the speaker and his message. Most audiences are largely moved by the personal influence of the speaker; if he is well received, they are at least disposed to listen attentively to his utterances. He should therefore avoid bluntness, or anything unnecessarily offensive, and should be ready to recognize whatever of excellence he may discover in his hearers (see Acts xxvi. 3); and since the truth which he

proclaims is often distasteful and sometimes repulsive to unrenewed men, he ought to search for common ground with his auditors, so that in the opening words of his discourse, he may present some thought concerning which they will agree with him.

(b.) The introduction is still further designed to excite the attention of the auditors, and to fix it on the subject in hand. This is necessary in order to put the hearers in the same relation to the topic as the speaker himself sustains, and thus prepare them to understand and receive his exact conception.

(3.) Its character.

(4.) As to its thought.

(a.) Its thought must be vitally connected with the proposition which it is designed to introduce.

It is distinct from the proposition, yet it must lie so close to it that no thought can come between it and the proposition. It is related to the discourse as the stem to the flower. The etymology of the word "introduction" defines the character of the object which it signifies. It is from *intro*, within, and *duco*, to lead; it should lead the hearer into the topic for discussion. It ought to do this so perfectly that no other introduction will be thought of that would do it as well. If such be its character it will seem to be necessary to the discourse.

This excludes commutable introductions, though these may, in rare cases, be tolerated. (See Saurin's discourse on "The Necessity of Universal Obedience.") Cicero condemns such introductions. (De Oratore, Watson's Translation, p. 177.)

(b.) The Introduction should also have unity. One central thought should gather all others around it. Two distinct and independent thoughts, either of which would conduct us to the topic, would be like adding a portico to a portico, or like building two distinct porticos side by side.

(c.) Its central thought must be already known to the hearer, or such as he will readily admit when presented; for the introduction must be self-evident statement rather than argument. The thought must also be interesting; for if it led logically into the subject, and yet did not excite interest in the hearer, the introduction would fail of its object. The introductory thought of Paul's discourse on Mars' Hill was one both familiar and interesting to his audience.

(B.) As to its style.

(a.) It must not be vehement nor splendid. The audience at the beginning of the sermon is cool and would not respond to passionate utterances. The style of the introduction must then be quiet and sober; not, indeed, destitute of energy and warmth, yet free from grandeur and ornament.

This rule is not absolute. If the audience has already become excited, then the quiet, sober exordium would be quite out of place. Moreover, a grand introduction, provided that its grandeur is chaste, and fitting to the theme introduced, may tend to impress men with the importance of that theme. But it is hazardous to build so imposing a portico, unless the workman has the genius to construct an edifice of still greater splendor.

(b.) It must be modest. Any expression of egotism or of conscious authority at the beginning of a discourse is offensive and will repel men. A preacher must, indeed, be bold for the truth, however much he may distrust himself; but his boldness and authority will serve him best in the body of his discourse, when he has placed before his hearers that truth which gives him his authority. If an authoritative tone is heard at the beginning, it should be, at the most, only an undertone.

(c.) It must be perspicuous, simple, precise. The audience, at first, being cool, sees, and is repelled by faults of style which it altogether overlooks when warmed and excited in the progress of the discourse. But the first impression made by a speaker frequently determines that which follows; hence the imperative necessity of exercising the greatest care concerning both the thought and diction of the exordium.

(4.) The Sources of Introductions.

The context of a text usually furnishes suitable material for the exordium. We may indicate the drift of the thought which led to the special declaration of the text, or we may develop some particular thought of the context which leads to the special truth which we wish to enforce. But, for the sake of variety, we should not be confined to the context for our introductions. The genus of which the truth of the text is the species, and vice versa, some maxim opposed to the teaching of the text, or some truth supplementing it, some fact of science, or history, or social life which

analogically suggests it, or which embodies it, may, in turn, furnish suitable material for exordiums. If we would be fresh and attractive, we must draw our introductions from as great a variety of sources as possible.

(5.) When shall the Exordium be prepared?

As it is designed to foreshadow and introduce the subject of the discourse, and as we do not thoroughly apprehend a subject until we have gone over the material of its several parts, it is clear that the Exordium should not be composed until the entire material of the discourse has been brought within the distinct apprehension of the speaker. (See Cicero, *De Oratore*, Watson's Translation, p. 177.)

II. The Proposition.

(1.) The proposition must be distinguished from the subject. The subject is simply an object of thought brought before the mind for its consideration, without respect to the form which that object of thought assumes; the proposition presents that object in some special form; the subject names, in a general way, the material for thought; the proposition puts that material into a definite shape. Thus every proposition is a subject, but every subject is not a proposition.

(2.) A proposition may be logical or rhetorical. It is logical when it simply affirms or denies something concerning the subject; it is rhetorical when its affirmation takes in, and is shaped by, the practical end contemplated by the orator. The rhetorical proposition, then, is always logical, but it is so shaped as to indicate the practical end aimed at by the speaker. E. g., "God is good," is simply a logical proposition. "The goodness of God ought to lead men to repentance for sin," is a rhetorical proposition. "God is faithful," is merely a logical proposition. "The faithfulness of God ought to produce corresponding fidelity in his creatures;" "The absolute faithfulness of God should lead to implicit trust in his word," are rhetorical propositions. "The goodness of God," "The faithfulness of God," are mere subjects; they are not propositions at all.

(3.) The proposition may be simple or complex. It is simple when it contains a single thought untrammelled by its various relations (e. g., Bushnell's *Sermons for the New Life*, p. 206,

"Obligation to God is our Privilege"); complex when it presents a thought in some of its relations. (Bushnell, p. 415, "Spiritual Dislodgements.") The complex proposition may be presented in a group of propositions, each of which contains one of its parts. (Bushnell, p. 143, "Light on the Cloud.")

(4.) As the sermon allows great freedom, our proposition may be, in form, a mere interrogation; or, instead of being formally expressed, it may come out in the unbroken flow of our discourse; but in such a case it should be sharply defined in the mind of the speaker. (Bushnell, p. 186, "Unconscious Influence.")

(5.) The relation of the proposition to the text. It should contain, as nearly as possible, the exact subject of the text, so that the audience addressed will see that the proposition, if announced, faithfully represents the subject-matter of the text.

When the text is itself a proposition, it may be used as such, without putting its thought into our own words.

(6.) The relation of the proposition to the sermon. Its substance should be identical with the substance of the sermon.

(7.) In style, the proposition should be concise, and absolutely perspicuous, so that it may be apprehended at once. Potter (Sac. Eloquence, p. 147) says, "It must be plain, clear, and precise, stating the subject, the whole subject, and nothing but the subject." The audience will then, at the outset, both understand our theme, and also clearly see the practical end we have in view in discussing it.

III. The Divisions or Proof.

In the process of proving or illustrating the proposition, it is necessarily divided. When the divisions of a proposition are such as sound logical analysis suggests, they unquestionably contribute to the clearness, unity, comprehensiveness, and progress of a discourse. But,

(1.) On what principle ought the division of a proposition to be made? We answer,

(a.) That the divisions of a proposition must be such as the subject shaped and limited by it naturally requires. Real division is never secured by arbitrary rules applied from without, which demand that every discourse shall be modelled after a given pattern, and should contain just so many divisions and sub-

divisions, regardless of the inherent nature of the topic unfolded in it. Some subjects evidently demand more divisions than others; as a general rule, that topic which requires the greatest intellectual effort to unfold it, demands the greatest number of divisions. Argumentative and didactic sermons usually require a greater number than hortatory discourses. But it is idle to point out the exact number of divisions that should enter into our sermons, or to warn against introducing too great a number. The number which the theme naturally demands cannot, without violence, be either augmented or diminished; but if our proposition is sharp and definite, the number will seldom, if ever, be too great for an ordinary discourse. If the divisions are thus made, it follows,—

(b.) That they will be exhaustive of the subject, as it is presented in the proposition. If they are not, then there is some defect in the analysis.

There is so broad a distinction between the subject in general, and as presented in a definite proposition, that divisions which exhaust the proposition may by no means exhaust the subject.

(2.) With what prominence should the statement of these divisions appear in the discourse? Never with such prominence as to interrupt or retard its movement. This takes place when the speaker pauses and formally introduces, and perhaps repeats, each division. His divisions thus become so many dams thrown across the stream of his discourse, over which his hearers are led with delay, and often with difficulty; whereas, they should simply open to his auditors new and enchanting views, as they are borne uninterruptedly onward by the tide of discourse. The division should be so announced as to make the auditors sensible that a new thought is now to claim their attention; yet this announcement should not cause delay, or give an unpleasant shock.

(3.) The language of the divisions should be as plain and terse as that of the main proposition; for each division is a subordinate proposition, which ought clearly to foreshadow all that is immediately introduced under it. This principle is violated when one depends on the development of the division to make the subordinate proposition which introduces it clear.

(4.) Transitions from one division to another.

(A.) The perfect transition is seen when the last sentence in the discussion of one division logically and necessarily introduces, without any intervening utterance to pave the way, the succeeding division; as, says Cicero, "Well-cut stones are united without cement." But this is an ideal seldom, if ever, realized.

(B.) Ordinarily, the divisions of a discourse must be united by some sentence, or phrase, or word. We are generally compelled to use a little cement. We must be careful, however, when this transition consists of a sentence or several sentences,

(a.) That its thought be vitally united with the thought of the divisions that it connects. In other words, they are not to be united with an artificial clasp, but by a living ligament.

(b.) The thought of such a transition ought to be interesting, enlivened, if possible, with some sentiment, in order that it may at least sustain the impression made by the preceding division; yet

(c.) Its thought must be strictly subordinate to that of the divisions which it connects; otherwise it will be an intercalated discourse rather than a transition.

(d.) When the transitions consist of words, or phrases, such as but, moreover, again, etc., and, in the next place, this leads us, etc., we must avoid the formality of often making our transitions by the use of the same word or phrase.

To make good transitions, which are the articulations of discourse, is an exceedingly delicate and difficult task. The skill and genius of an author are often determined by them. A proper arrangement is necessary to the highest success in them, since no man can vitally link incongruous thoughts or arguments.

(5.) Should the divisions of a sermon be preannounced?

No positive law should be laid down in reference to it. Every case must be decided on its own merits, and in each decision the nature of the subject of discourse and the character of the audience must be taken into consideration. But, as a hint to guide us in our decision, in any particular instance, we must bear in mind that progress in discourse is so fundamental and important that nothing must be permitted unnecessarily to interrupt it. The formal preannouncement of the divisions does for the moment interrupt it; so, unless it is quite certain that we shall gain by

preannouncement more than we shall thus lose, it should not be made. The gain might perhaps be greater than the loss,

(a.) When the didactic element predominates in the discourse. Preannouncement unquestionably contributes to clearness in teaching. And, since teaching has a large place in pulpit discourse, the preannouncement of the divisions of a sermon, which is largely didactic, may be desirable.

(b.) When the argument of the discourse is close and somewhat intricate. Then the divisions placed side by side may throw light on each other, and help the hearer to a clearer apprehension of the whole course of reasoning. But preannouncement should always be as informal as is consistent with precision. We can often clearly preannounce our divisions in an unbroken sentence. (See, e. g., Spurgeon's Sermons, sixth series, Ser. x. Bushnell's Sermons for the New Life, xvii.)

If it be said that the Greek and Roman orators did not preannounce the divisions of their discourses, we reply, that while this is generally true, they did sometimes lay before their auditors the main points that they intended to discuss; and that their general custom may, in part, at least, be accounted for by the fact, that the occasions which called forth their orations sometimes sufficiently revealed the course which they intended to take. It is true, also, that they sometimes took pains to conceal the preparation made, lest their hearers might accuse them of resorting to unworthy artifice in order to gain their cause. However, the didactic element was by no means as prominent in their orations as it is in the sermon; hence, they would not have the same reason to preannounce the divisions of their discourses. And, as the ancient rhetoricians insisted on progress in discourse, they may have often omitted formal division, on the ground already indicated. If it be said that the Church Fathers did not divide their sermons, we answer, that many of their sermons were expository, so that the passages read for exposition indicated their tracks of thought. Their topical sermons were often constructed in accordance with classical models, and the instructions of the ancient rhetoricians.

IV. The Conclusion or Peroration.

The best orators, both secular and religious, of ancient and modern times, have regarded the proper conclusion of a discourse as of the highest moment. They have taken the greatest pains and displayed the most consummate skill in constructing it. No one, I think, will question their wisdom, since the success of a

speaker is often determined by the last impression which he makes on his hearers. It is important to inquire, then,

(1.) What is the general character of a good conclusion? It should be the strongest, most impressive part of a discourse. This is demanded,—

(A.) By the great oratorical law of movement. This law, as we have seen, requires us to advance from the feeble to the stronger, from the less popular and impressive to the more popular and impressive; so that, guided by it, all the energy and power of the discourse should culminate in the conclusion.

(B.) By the great aim of all oratorical discourse, which is to move the will; hence, in the conclusion, all the force of the separate thoughts or arguments must be concentrated and brought to bear on that one great object of the orator.

(2.) When, however, we consider the different kinds of conclusion, we find that each is largely determined by the character of the discourse to which it belongs.

(A.) If the sermon is doctrinal, there are two general methods of procedure:—

(a.) The doctrine, as a whole, or some special phase of it having been stated, the preacher proceeds to prove, or illustrate it. This being accomplished, he may begin his peroration by recapitulating the main points of his argument. Such recapitulation should be as rapid as is consistent with clearness; and the thought, so far as possible, should be clothed with new language, and set in new lights. When the whole argument is thus condensed into a single paragraph, it is then, if ever, that the hearers are convinced of its truth. But no true sermonizer stops there; he at once proceeds to apply the truth to his hearers, to point out to them how they should feel and act in view of it. But, in such a case as this, his application must be short, sharp, and incisive.

(b.) The preacher may state a doctrine, which, being generally received, he does not care to prove or illustrate, but from which he wishes to draw certain practical inferences. The inferences in such a case will constitute the body of the sermon, and the last may become its fitting conclusion. Such inferences, however, must flow from the very heart of the doctrine, must sustain vital

relations to each other, and must be so arranged that each will add to the impression produced by the preceding. Thus they will form a climax.

(B.) If the preacher desires to enforce a duty, and

(a.) That duty is not well known, or is doubtful to the minds of his hearers, he must unfold it at length, or prove it. This will constitute the body of his discourse; while the peroration, in such a case, will briefly present the motives to its performance, or point out the possibility and manner of performing it. The duty and the motives to its performance may sometimes form the body of the discourse, while the conclusion may show how the duty can be done.

(b.) If a duty well known is presented, the motives to its performance will make up the body of the sermon, and the conclusion will be found in the presentation of the last motive, or by showing how the obstacles which stand in the way of performing the duty may be overcome, or by revealing or emphasizing the sin of neglecting such a duty, or by pointing out the blessings of performing it.

(C.) Whatever be the character of the sermon, a fitting conclusion may be made to it by seizing upon some thought or incident which gathers into itself the general thought of the whole discourse, so as to present it as a unit in a new and impressive form.

(D.) Whatever may be the form of the conclusion, it must be organically connected with the preceding discussion. It must grow out of it, and be necessary to it; it must strictly carry out and enforce the topic treated. It must be the same stream of thought, increased in volume and force, which at the beginning of the sermon was seen to flow from the text.

(E.) The foregoing being true, all empty declamation is excluded from the peroration. Better omit the conclusion altogether, than indulge in threadbare commonplaces, or meaningless platitudes.

CHAPTER XI.

EXTEMPORANEOUS PREACHING.

THIS method of preaching was universal in the first centuries of Christianity, and was the chosen method of the Reformers. It is still quite common on the continent of Europe. Many of the French and German preachers, however, memorize and recite their sermons. Many dissenters of Great Britain extemporize, as well as a few of the Church of England. These facts show that it is possible for men to preach successfully in this manner.

Let us ask, then, —

(1.) What is meant by speaking extemporaneously? If we follow the etymology of *extempore*, it means to speak without previous preparation. But the word is not now used in its root sense. It designates discourse that has been premeditated, but which is delivered neither from manuscript nor from memory.

(2.) What amount of preparation is demanded in order to preach extemporaneously? I answer, the most thorough preparation possible is absolutely indispensable. The subject and the mind of the speaker must so interpenetrate each other that nothing can jostle the orator from the subject-matter of his discourse.

(3.) How can we secure the requisite preparation? I reply, that language and thought are so intimately connected with each other, that we probably think only by means of language of some kind. To become thoroughly acquainted, then, with a topic, we must give tangibility and definiteness to our ideas by putting them into words. Until we have done this by writing or mental elaboration, we have not sufficient assurance that we really possess the thoughts we would utter extemporaneously.

Writing and mental elaboration may be profitably combined in our preparation. We may jot down with the pen our principal thoughts and illustrations, and then, aided by these jottings, we may with greater ease mentally elaborate the whole.

Mental elaboration, however, should decidedly predominate. If we write the greater part of our discourse, the memory will be apt to busy itself with what we have written, and thus hamper our delivery.* Under such circumstances we shall recite or declaim. But, on the other hand, mental elaboration is the same intellectual process in kind as that through which the extempore speaker passes in the delivery of his discourse. To repeat a mental process is always comparatively easy; the predominant mental process of the study, then, should be like that of the pulpit.

Moreover, there is a marked difference between the written and spoken style. The latter is that of the genuine extempore speaker, but it is also that of mental elaboration, since the audience is involuntarily before the speaker when thus preparing his discourse. But as it is easy to repeat a mental process, so also is it to repeat it in the same style of language which we employed when we first passed through it. The pen, then, if used, should be kept strictly subordinate to mental elaboration.

Shall we elaborate the subordinate parts, the sentences of discourse? This depends on the degree of thoroughness and finish which a given occasion may demand, and on the facility already acquired in speaking without manuscript.

If one can speak extemporaneously with correctness and ease, he may dispense with the elaboration of the minutiae; but the comparatively inexperienced speaker ought to elaborate his thought in all of its details. He must be quite certain before he rises to address an audience, that he can express fitly and appropriately his entire conception.

Will such elaboration burden the memory? Since its main object is not to secure elegance of style, but to clarify and fill out our conceptions, there is no effort to remember mere words and sentences. There is no conscious burden on the memory. The speaker possesses his message, and it possesses him. The words employed in its elaboration will spontaneously rise to his lips, or be replaced by language still more energetic. If, on the contrary, a speaker seizes on two or three leading thoughts, and, trusting to the inspiration of the moment, attempts to unfold them without previous careful elaboration of the details of his discourse, he may speak with greater eloquence than in any other way; but, if the

* See "The Preacher and the King, a Criticism on Bourdaloue," p. 58.

coveted inspiration should not come, and the probability is that it would not, his discourse would probably be a series of pointless platitudes. Such preachers have done more than all other things combined to evoke contempt for extempore discourse.

To speak well extemporaneously, an hour or two before the delivery of his sermon the preacher should pass through it mentally, in order to assure himself that the thought which he wishes to utter is securely within his grasp. This gives him also an opportunity of incorporating additional matter, of rearranging any part of his sermon, and of filling out any paragraph in which he may have discovered some deficiency.

Since, in the case of beginners, this method of preaching especially taxes the nervous system, there ought to be perfect quiet at least half an hour before speaking, and as soon as the discourse is ended the same rest should be sought and continued until the nervous excitement is allayed.

(4.) It is, however, objected, —

(a.) That by this method of preaching an inelegant style is contracted, which is offensive to good taste. We grant that very many extempore preachers are slovenly in style, but deny that this is a necessary result of this mode of preaching. Elegance of style is the result of culture, discipline and painstaking, and may be acquired by an extemporizer as well as by one who writes and reads; and it is notorious that many write and read sermons which are composed in a most slovenly manner.

(b.) That in extemporaneous discourse the same thoughts and phrases continually recur. So do they often in written sermons. Suitable diligence will save a man from this blemish of style, whatever may be his method of preaching.

(5.) There are some things that especially commend this method of preaching.

(a.) When the extemporaneous discourse is as thorough as the written, the people almost universally prefer it.

(b.) The spoken style is more easily listened to and understood than the written, and hence more effective.

(c.) The extempore speaker has the unfettered use of his body in the delivery of his discourse, and especially of the eye, which contributes so much to the power of the true orator.

(d.) When one who reads wishes to make a strong impression, he leaves his manuscript and extemporizes; and in times of revival, readers either throw aside their manuscripts or call in some extemporizer to help them, thus acknowledging that the manuscript is not to be trusted when one wishes to make the strongest impression. And it is true that those preachers, in all denominations in our country, who have been most largely blessed in saving souls, have preached extemporaneously. (See Sprague's *Annals of the American Pulpit*. Also Kidder's *Homiletics*, p. 489.)

(6.) But it is asked, cannot the two methods be combined? Some men have succeeded tolerably in doing this; but there is such a marked difference between the written and spoken style that most men find themselves embarrassed between the two. Then any ordinary man finds it quite difficult enough to perfect himself in one method, without attempting the other. It is usually hardly possible to *excel* in both. Those who begin with both usually end in adopting the one or the other exclusively. On the whole, while we ought to be able to preach in either way when necessity demands it, it will be wisest to adopt the one method or the other, and put forth all our power to excel in it; remembering, however, that *good* extempore preaching is acceptable on all occasions, while there are circumstances in which the use of the manuscript would be manifestly improper. (See, for an opposite and perhaps juster view, Prof. Parks' articles on "The Three Fundamental Methods of Preaching," *Bib. Sac.*, vols. xxviii. and xxix.)

PART SECOND.

STYLE.

It is not my purpose to present an exhaustive analysis of this topic, but to note such qualities of style as the pulpit imperatively demands. Some of these are fundamental and indispensable to all kinds of composition; others are peculiar to the oration and the sermon.

Since we write or speak in order to communicate thought, and to move men to action, it is pre-eminently important for us to make ourselves understood. All writers on rhetoric therefore agree that,

I. Perspicuity is the first and greatest excellence of style. Without this prime quality other excellences could hardly exist.

But we should distinguish between perspicuity of style and of subject. The latter may be wrapped in darkness which no human intellect can dissipate. The speaker cannot be held responsible for this. In such a case the best service which he can render may be to show that the subject is hopelessly obscure. But if the subject admits of partial elucidation, at the best, it may be possible to present it only in a dim light. In such circumstances all that can fairly be demanded of the orator is that the language which he uses in treating his subject should be clear.

Perspicuity must be considered not only in relation to the subject, but also to the hearers. That which is lucid to one audience is obscure to another. The preacher, however, addresses no one class, but all classes, and must clothe his thoughts in language so transparent that the illiterate and inattentive cannot fail to apprehend them. They should "enter the mind as the sun the eye, even although not intently fixed upon it." (Day's Art of Discourse, p. 292.)

But how can perspicuity of style be secured? I answer, —

(1.) By clear thinking. Language and thought are so intimately connected that perspicuous writing or speaking is possible only on the condition of clear thinking. If we have definite conceptions, we can express them definitely; if our thoughts are vivid, we can clothe them in even brilliant language. I do not say that he who thinks clearly always expresses his thought perspicuously, but that he cannot so express it unless he thinks clearly.

(2.) By putting ourselves into the position of those whom we address. We must gauge as accurately as possible their intelligence and power of thought, and then so present our ideas that they would be clear to ourselves if we occupied their point of view.

(3.) We must employ words which are familiar to all; such as are most frequently heard in common conversation. These are most perspicuous, because from childhood they have been linked with the thoughts and objects which they represent. This rule will lead us to a free use of Saxon. (See *Mediaeval Preaching*, pp. 332, 333.)

(4.) We must make use of concrete terms rather than of abstract, as the former are always vastly more impressive than the latter. Abstract and technical terms, at the best, are but imperfectly understood by the majority of the people, and tend to obscure rather than to elucidate thought; if they make any impression, it is apt to be extremely feeble.*

(5.) All barbarisms, e.g., ~~celestial panoply~~, ~~"creature-comforts"~~ (see Day's "Art of Discourse," p. 261), and ambiguous words and phrases, must be avoided.

(6.) Our metaphors must be drawn from objects familiar to our hearers. If we should address a congregation of farmers, and draw our metaphors from the classics, or from handicrafts with which they were not acquainted, we would fail of perspicuity. In Jeremy Taylor are many gross violations of this rule.

(7.) Relative pronouns must not be separated far from their antecedents, and the reference to their antecedents must be so clear that no one can mistake it. (See Matt. xiv. 20.) All qualifying

* Herbert Spencer, *Essays Moral, Political and Esthetic*, p. 15, says, we should not say, "In proportion as the manners, customs, and amusements of a nation are cruel and barbarous, the regulations of their penal code will be severe;" but rather, "In proportion as men delight in battles, bull-fights and combats of gladiators, will they punish by hanging, burning and the rack."

words, so far as possible, must stand in proximity to the words qualified.

(8.) Care must be paid to the structure of sentences and paragraphs.

The different clauses of a sentence should be so arranged as to leave no doubt as to which contains the main thought which we wish to express. The qualifying clauses should generally stand first, unless they are so numerous that it would require too great effort to carry them till that which they qualify is reached. In that case a part may precede and a part may follow that which is qualified. (Herbert Spencer's "Philosophy of Style," "Essays, Moral, Political, and Esthetic," pp. 21-25.)

The same care which we bestow on the arrangement of the paragraphs of the entire discourse, or of the clauses of the sentence, we must give to the order of the sentences of the paragraph. Each sentence should be an advance on the preceding, and should so completely cover the ground that there will be no necessity of retracing our steps in order to say something that has been left unsaid. As in the discourse, so in the paragraph, unity is the fundamental law.

No undeviating law can be laid down as to the manner in which the paragraph should be constructed. It may sometimes be climacteric; but if it were invariably so, then the structure of paragraphs would lack variety. Sometimes the first sentences of the paragraph may simply qualify its main thought, which is reserved to the last. This is not always possible. We usually begin with the main thought. Each successive sentence is designed to unfold or confirm it. But, whatever the procedure may be, perspicuity cannot be attained without a just order of the sentences.

(9.) It is an important inquiry, what degree of diffuseness is required in order to secure perspicuity? This does not admit of a categorical answer. Greater diffuseness is allowable, often demanded, in the oral, than in the written discourse. We can calmly think of what we read, but we must apprehend the public speaker at the time in which he utters his thoughts, or not at all. The law for the orator is, that he must be sufficiently diffuse to make himself understood as he speaks. He should state his thought in as few words as possible; but, if there are those in his audience who may not apprehend or feel the full force of his

statement, he should illustrate it, or state it in another form ; always being careful not to weary, by too great prolixity, his most intelligent hearers.

(10.) If a speaker would secure the highest perspicuity, he must avoid the style of the essay. Whenever his subject admits of it, he should speak directly to his audience in the second person. The written style is best for the reader ; the spoken, for the hearer. To listen to the finished, compact periods of the essay is always difficult and wearisome, while the more direct utterances of the genuine oration are easily apprehended, and rather refresh than exhaust the auditor.* (Examples of the spoken style: Pitt, Fox, Daniel Webster, Wendell Phillips, Jno. Bright, Spurgeon ; Chalmers often approached it ; Saurin. The essay style, Burke.)

Language should never be employed for its own sake, but only as the medium through which thought is revealed. If that medium can be made so perfect that it will attract no attention to itself, but fix the attention wholly on the thought, then, and not till then, the ideal of perspicuity, which every speaker should have before him, will have been reached.

II. The second quality of style which we consider indispensable to effective speaking is *energy*. While vitally united with perspicuity, it is separable from it. It is an additional element of power. Perspicuity reveals thought ; energy enforces it. It is that in style which impresses the ideas of the speaker on his hearers, arouses their sensibilities, and tends to stir them to action. Let us notice, —

(1.) Its source. The style and the man cannot be separated. If one's intellect is strong and energetic, so will be his style. Where there is energy of thought, there will be energy of expression.

Three things, at least, tend to produce this energy of thought, —

* "The essayist quietly affirms a proposition ; the orator vehemently asks a question. 'You say so and so,' observes the essayist about to refute an opponent. 'Do you mean to tell us so and so?' demands the impassioned orator. The writer asserts that 'the excesses of Catiline became at last insupportable even to the patience of the Senate.' 'How long will you abuse our patience, Catiline?' exclaims the orator." — *Caxtoniana*, p. 95.

(a.) Natural strength of intellect ;

(b.) Discipline, such as may be acquired by any diligent student ;

(c.) Vividness of conception. Without the latter, whatever may be one's natural or acquired mental strength, he cannot speak or write with force. Now the preacher is called to proclaim the truths of the Bible. If he would gain a vivid conception of those truths, they must become, first of all, the subject of constant and enthusiastic study ; but, before one can acquire any just conception of them, they must be spiritually discerned, — in other words, they must be felt. He who has the most thorough experience of biblical truths will have, other things being equal, the most vivid intellectual conception of them. Such a man will preach them with the greatest energy. So true is this that it may be said, no man will be able to preach the Gospel in an energetic style, if at all, who has not felt its power in his own heart. If gifted, he may preach with force *about* it, but he cannot so proclaim it itself.

(2.) While a man's style will partake largely of himself, it is also true that the force of expression which flows from native or acquired energy, and vividness of conception, may be augmented by care bestowed on the diction itself.

(A.) Freedom from abstract or technical terms contributes as largely to energy as to perspicuity. In fact, a speaker may express himself justly and clearly in general terms, but the impression made will be comparatively faint ; if he would intensify it, he must use special or concrete terms. "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee." (Matt. xviii. 9.) If we should say, "If any member of a man's body should offend him, he ought to destroy it, and rid himself of it," we would express the same thought, but in a comparatively languid manner. The difference arises from abandoning the direct address, "thine, thee ;" exchanging the specific term "eye" for the general term "member," and the specific terms "pluck" and "cast" for the general ones "destroy" and "rid."

(B.) A free yet judicious use of representative imagery also contributes to energy. We know, from observation, that the most impassioned style abounds in figures of speech. This fact, without any explanation, would prove our proposition. But it is not diffi-

cult, I think, to point out the reason why tropes augment the force of style. Let us notice, —

(a.) Metaphor. This is based on the resemblance of two objects. While the comparison between them is suggested, it has no formal expression as in the simile; e. g., “*dead in sins*” (1 Pet. ii. 28). Now there are two things in metaphor which contribute to energy of style. First, the comparison of objects being only suggested, the imagination of the hearer is stimulated to apprehend it in its completeness. Second, in most metaphors the name of some sensible object is used to set before us that which is insensible or abstract. It is the concrete term, the sensible object, as we have already seen, which tends to penetrate and stir men.

(b.) Synecdoché; by this a part is put for the whole, the species for the genus, and vice versa. While putting the whole for a part, or the genus for the species, has its use in softening an expression, the contrary gives it force, because it substitutes the specific for the general. Thus we designate a ship as a *sail*, a house as a *roof*, war by the *sword* (Mic. iv. 3, etc).

(c.) Metonymy. In this the word by which we represent an object belongs to another different in kind from that so represented. Without attempting to mention the different kinds of metonymy, we notice that we put the effect for the cause; e. g., “gray hairs” for “old age,” — the instrument for the agent; as when we speak of an essay, calling it “the production of an elegant pen.” We also put the “mitre” for the priesthood, the “crown” for royalty (“Campbell’s Rhet.,” p. 356); *tears* for sorrow (Ps. xlii. 3). Here, again, it is the specific concrete terms that impart energy.

Personification, for the same reason, adds force. Hyperbole awakens attention by its boldness, and the imagination is called into play in order to retrench or add to what has been said. It is allowable where there is little or no danger of being misunderstood. Apostrophe startles; dramatism arrests attention and kindles interest by presenting different characters, into whose mouths are put fitting sentiments. Into all these figures, except, perhaps, hyperbole, the concrete very largely enters. While we

should be sparing in the use of this bolder imagery, it may all be made to contribute to the energy of the pulpit.

(C.) Energy also depends on the arrangement of the words and clauses of sentences. The order already noted as contributing to perspicuity also imparts energy. But we wish to notice, further, that the logical order of the simple sentence is, subject, verb, object, when the verb is active, or subject, copula, or substantive verb, predicate. In such a sentence the beginning is the most important place. An inversion of its order, therefore, so as to place the capital thought at the beginning, often greatly contributes to force; e. g., "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" is far more forcible than Diana of the Ephesians is great. "Blessed are the poor in spirit" has greater energy than The poor in spirit are blessed. "Silver and gold have I none," etc. (Acts iii. 6); how weak, comparatively, is, I have no gold or silver! etc. The placing of "*none*" last also adds force. When a sentence begins with a conjunction, a conjunctive phrase or phrases, or with a call to attention, the word immediately succeeding is emphatic; e. g., "Behold, *now* is the accepted time." Neh. xiii. 26., — "Even *him*."

In complex sentences co-ordinate and correlative words and clauses should be placed in corresponding members, so as to throw light upon and strengthen each other.

What we have said of the structure of the sentence is only a hint on a very important subject; yet it may be sufficient to show that the topic should not be overlooked by one who would secure the highest energy of style.

(D.) Antithesis, when not so constantly employed as to become monotonous, adds great force. For the sake of it, however, truth is sometimes sacrificed. It is needless to say that such antithesis is pernicious.

(E.) Conciseness promotes energy. It should, however, never be carried so far as to militate against perspicuity. Yet greater conciseness is allowable as the speaker moves onward toward the close of his discourse. His expressions, under the heat of passion, naturally become more condensed; but perspicuity is not thereby endangered, for his subject is now clearly within the grasp of his hearers, and in their mental excitement they quickly apprehend the meaning of his tersest, most elliptical utterances. But in every part of

the discourse there should be sufficient conciseness to exclude pleonasm and verbosity. Not only redundant words should be avoided, but the simpler and more direct phrases should be preferred to the more circuitous and prolix. Every word not needed in the presentation and enforcement of the thought is an excrescence. It hinders movement; it helps to weary the auditor.

(F.) No speaker should aim to make all parts of his discourse equally energetic. If he does, he wearies by the evenly sustained movement. All should be perspicuous; no part should be wholly wanting in energy, but some portions ought to rise above others in force. And as, at the close, the final, decisive impression must be made, that part should possess greater energy than the beginning.

III. Beauty is the third fundamental quality of style. It cannot be defined except by its manifestations and effects. It is that in style which pleases the esthetic taste. This taste is universal, but on account of differences in culture it exists among men in various degrees. Therefore, what will please some will repel others. In addressing men, this difference must always be taken into account, and the discourse must be such, if possible, as will please the taste of all. But if we cannot sharply define beauty we may note its sources, viz., thought and its expression.

(1.) Thought. This includes ideas which are independent of external realities as well as those which represent those realities. Now, as style and thought are inseparable, the beauty of the latter is reflected to a greater or less extent in the former; at least, there can be true beauty of style only where there is beauty of thought.

Very many of the truths which the preacher of the gospel must proclaim are in themselves beautiful, while others are repulsive or terrible; but the latter serve as foils to enhance the beauty of the former. The true artist never misrepresents nature; it is his work to direct attention to beautiful objects; but if an ugly one comes in his way, he depicts it, and it serves the purpose of rendering those that are beautiful still more so. So, in pulpit discourse, the deformity of sin may be made to enhance the beauty of holiness; the meanness of covetousness, the loveliness of benevolence; the terribleness of hell, the glory of heaven.

(2.) Beauty flows from the expression of thought. I mean by "expression," not simply the diction, but all that by which the

thought of any proposition is presented and enforced. In expression thus understood there are certain things essential to beauty. We will briefly note them.

(a.) Unity. The Roman school of painting defines beauty as "multitude in unity." (Shedd, p. 88.) Beauty results from the unity into which is moulded the vast variety of particulars that enter into a painting or discourse. Unity is at the same time the fundamental law of discourse and the innermost element of beauty.

(b.) Propriety. This is a fitting correspondence between the ideas and the words chosen to express them; the subject and its discussion; the character of the speaker, or the place or the audience and the discourse. For every thought there is a congruous word. A sad thought demands that word which will express its sadness most perfectly; a joyful thought, one which will express its joyfulness; a solemn subject requires serious and weighty discussion; and for a preacher to speak in the pulpit to a congregation of worshippers with the air of unconcern exhibited by one who speaks at a political gathering would be shockingly incongruous. Whenever all the congruities which belong to the pulpit are observed, beauty is thereby enhanced. To say nothing of the effect of other congruities, when a speaker selects just the words appropriate to his thought, he never fails to please both the cultivated and the uncultivated.

(c.) Tone. This in style or painting is that which represents the sentiment of the speaker or artist. It cannot be defined. It does not inhere in any one thing that belongs to style, but it is the inmost spirit of the speaker diffusing itself through the whole expression. If he is morose and misanthropic, it will appear in his utterances, though no cynical word drops from his lips; if he is full of love to God and man, that will tinge all his diction. Whenever the tone of one's style is such as flows from a noble mind permeated with the truth of God, it adds great beauty as well as power to his utterances.

(d.) Grace. This is freedom or skill in rendering ideas. Shedd defines it as "beauty in motion." It is the power of presenting our thoughts with a free, bold hand. It implies movement. That which is in repose on the canvas or in nature may be beautiful, but only that in motion is graceful. But this freedom in presenting

thought is possible only to one who conceives strongly and is master of the subject in hand. In Shakespeare we have characters so presented that they move and act before us. (See Shedd's Homiletics, p. 101; Day's Art of Discourse, p. 339.)

If this view of the sources of beauty is correct, it follows that true beauty of style is not ornamentation, coloring laid on from without. It rather springs spontaneously from other excellences of style. When we strive after unity and propriety; when, by communion with that which is most noble, we cultivate within ourselves the highest, purest sentiment, and thus impart suitable tone to our style; when, through clear, strong conceptions of our subject we are able to render our thought with the greatest freedom and thus add the charm of *grace*, — we secure beauty also. We seek other excellences, and she comes unsought hand in hand with them.

Beauty is the only quality of style which we can have in excess. We cannot have too much perspicuity or energy, nor too great unity or propriety. But excessive beauty is always *false*, because it is laid on from without, and, to say the least, is as great a blemish of style as inelegance.

IV. There are two qualities of style implied in what we have already said, but of such importance to the pulpit as to demand special attention.

(1.) Popularity. Language is popular when made up of words which are understood by all, — common words used by the people in their daily intercourse. Yet everything offensive to good taste must be excluded. Slang or vulgarity should never be heard in the pulpit; but our language is freighted with plain, strong words, which commend themselves alike to all. While they are understood by the illiterate, they are always, on account of their simplicity, most pleasing to the learned.

Such language is alone suited to the orator, whose work is to touch and move the multitude. Popular words, on account of their familiarity, most strongly appeal to the sympathies of the masses.

But popular language should especially characterize the pulpit, since the truths of the Gospel are designed alike for all. The preacher should strive to make his message plain to the weakest intellect within the sound of his voice. Luther said that he endeavored to make the servants understand him.

(2.) Scriptural tone is also demanded for the pulpit. This is, perhaps, hardly co-ordinate with the preceding, but if it stands on a different plane it is both appreciable and important.

Those sermons which abound in quotations from the Bible are not on that account scriptural in tone. A discourse filled with such citations might be quite destitute of this quality. But when the intellect has been permeated and quickened by the Divine Word, and the heart has felt its power, when the whole man has been informed by it, then that Word finds expression in the style. The preacher may not quote the exact language of Scripture, but every sentence will be fragrant with it; but if he does quote, the passages come unsought as the exact and natural expression of his own experience and conceptions. Such discourses are scriptural in tone.

There are great advantages in the true scriptural style.

(a.) When we use the words of the Bible, it gives us an authority not our own. We say by it, "God says so and so," and if you can disregard his messenger, you cannot disregard him.

(b.) There are great truths of the Divine Word, — such as God's purposes, wrath, mercy, and final retribution, which find a more fitting and terrible expression in Scripture than it would be possible for man to give them. We would not dare to utter them, unless we found them in the inspired Word.

(c.) It is our privilege to make use of all the imagery of the Bible, to transfer, so far as possible, all its beauty and sublimity to our sermons. This is not plagiarism; it is a duty. (See Vinet, pp. 399-402; also 411-417.)

Let us ask, finally, how shall we gain the foregoing excellences of style? We have anticipated and partially answered this question, in noting that suitable tone results from the highest, noblest culture, — scriptural tone from clear apprehension and large experience of Biblical truth. In addition, we say, study

(1.) The best authors: those who, by the consent of the ages, have the highest places accorded to them.

(2.) Art and its principles.

(3.) Submit your productions to the best critics within your reach, and after you have written with heat and freedom, criticise, as thoroughly as possible, what you have thus produced.

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